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MOORED

By Anna A. Rogers

“**I**S Miss Hester dependent upon him in any way? I mean upon his boarding here?” came from the curving depths of the hammock, which eclipsed all of Mrs. Poyet but a pretty spill-over of lace and lawn and two dainty patent-leather toe-tips.

And Joan Conover—wife and mother—sitting in the low wicker chair, her brown head bowed over a work-table, laughed, but continued cutting until she achieved an acute angle. Then she leaned back and emphasized her remarks with the huge pair of shears.

“Dependent upon him? Why, Cloelia, the Archibalds would be rich—rich even for these days—if Aunt Hester would only sell the land. Her brother only laughs about it, because he laughs at everything; but her sister, Mrs. Pattison—Aunt Clarice, you know—has no patience with the whole situation. Fortunately she was left quite a comfortable home and fortune by her husband, who was killed the first year of the Civil War—on the Northern side, mark you! And the Archibalds are borderland rebels *à la* Maryland, if you know what that means. Aunt Hester never entirely forgave her, so there has always been a little friction between them. Not one foot of the old estate will be sold while Aunt Hester lives—hence the ‘guests’—for heaven’s sake, never say boarders at The Oaks! And as for Professor Pfarre, he’s lived here for years for next to nothing, and has made a pathetic slave of dear old Miss Archibald. He has imbued her with the idea that he is the jugular vein of modern scientific thought. Any little stab

at him and exact science would bleed to death before our very eyes! He has deliberately underpaid his bills here at The Oaks for years—Aunt Clarice told me—counting upon two things securely: in the first place, Miss Archibald is a gentlewoman to her fingertips—this aunt of my husband’s—and, in the second place, she has the awe of her generation for learning.”

“Awe for that little scientific cad! That czar in the empire of egoism! That miserable, selfish— But Joan dear, why does her brother allow it? What does he say?”

“Oh, Uncle Torm is too funny about it! Do take him off to the mushroom meadow and ask him his opinion of Simon Pfarre, Ph.D. Short of the mushroom meadow, he will be distinctly heard by the entire household.”

“Then you think Miss Hester Archibald, gentlewoman, would be the gainer by the unkenneling of this—this von Humboldt? Now, think before you answer, for I’ve got an inspiration.”

“Oh, Cloelia, please don’t! I’ve only got you for a few weeks, and I know what it means when you have an inspiration about a man.”

“You haven’t answered my question,” quoth the hammock imperturbably, and the toes twitched with impatience.

“Of course, of course! Aunt Hester has long thought that death alone would ever relieve her of this sacred incubus, although she is too courteous even to whisper it to me. She’s worn to the bone by his selfish exactions.”

“Yes, but if he goes there’s Miss Archibald’s best room vacant on her

hands! I could take it, but only for a little while."

"That's all you know of us at The Oaks! Why, dear old Admiral Sproull has written twice a year for board here for two years—ever since his retirement and residence in Washington. Ah, Cloelia, there's a man! He's Lord Chesterfield, Major Pendennis, the Vicar of Wakefield, Paul Jones and two or three others all rolled into one, and brought up to date mentally."

"Good gracious!" sneered the hammock, and a delicate hand punched the pillows into position. Then after a moment's silence Mrs. Poyet's light, flexible voice announced:

"Well, that settles it—and him. Behold the ousting of the Ph.D.!" and further than that the hammock refused to explain, notwithstanding Mrs. Conover's threats and pleadings.

"No, Joan, not a word. I noticed ages ago that the—what do you call it?—the propelling power of an undertaking is reduced by explanation, boasting, words of any sort. It's an escape of valuable steam; it's a dead loss. I verily believe that the reason there are so few big things done, individually, in the world today is because it's a talking age. After Professor Pfarre is evicted, beloved Joan, we'll talk it over."

"Evicted?"

"Evicted."

The stopping of a trolley-car at the carriage gate at the end of the lane caused both young women to look up—Mrs. Poyet popping up on her elbows an instant, and again disappearing—and the slow, impressive approach of the little Ph.D. himself changed the conversation.

Although Simon Pfarre was such a scrap of a man, he irresistibly suggested an elephant, in his curves and disproportions, at least. Especially elephantine was the inadequacy of that fleshy sloping back. Elephantine was the large, projecting head with its elongated ears, the receding forehead, the tiny, restless black eyes, the long nose at an obtuse angle with the thin, smooth upper lip.

His very complexion bespoke a stalled, manacled existence. View him back, front or in profile, there was no getting away from the absurd analogy. He filled—loosely—the chair of physics in the university down in the city three miles below The Oaks.

He was forty-four and a bachelor by instinct; one is tempted to say by heredity, for his father had succeeded in escaping matrimony until he was fifty-six. Simon Pfarre recognized in woman one all-predominant characteristic—acquisitiveness. He was always on guard against it with a sullen intensity out of all proportion to the real necessities of the situation. As a result, the gayest of Lotharios could have been no more preoccupied by woman's teasing image.

In conversation he had a way of slowly repeating the last phrase of a sentence before going on to the next, and this habit did not add to his general charm.

Cloelia's head again darted up from the hammock's ellipse, and she exchanged glances with Mrs. Conover as the man of science drew nearer and sought to slink past them along the winding path, his head bowed as if in profound thought; which detached attitude failed, however, to prevent a voice startlingly saccharine from calling out:

"Professor Pfarre, do come here a moment, please; I want your advice."

The man looked up, pretending to be startled, and really alarmed, but after a moment of instinctive hesitation he crossed the lawn in long strides that threatened the division of his being.

"Am I mistaken in assuming that someone addressed me?" he said, bowing smilelessly, begrudgingly, to both women.

"Someone did," caressed the voice of the widow, and a bare pretty forearm piled the pillows higher under a very blond head, while gray eyes strangely far apart, with black lashes, sought and clung to his furtive, nervous gaze.

"Sit down here, Professor Pfarre; I have to go to the house for something,"

said Mrs. Conover, rising, her face flushed from suppressed laughter, recognizing with a thrill Cloelia's plan of battle.

"Do nothing of the kind, madam: I cannot remain! I have much work to do before nightfall—before nightfall. My eyes, unfortunately, will not admit of the midnight oil, and so much precious time is lost to me—lost to me."

He averted his eyes from the hammock, after one quick glance at those brazen toe-tips impudently remaining unsheathed under his very nose. Surely modesty no longer existed on the earth; the hideous alternate was before his wounded vision in all his goings and comings; everywhere was a ghastly seductiveness, malignantly studied by these enemies of his own earnest striving sex, forever at war with woman and her pernicious ways. Joan wandered toward the house and Pfarre sank into her empty chair, the better to get at his handkerchief wherewith to wipe his brow and hands, damp from an excess of mixed emotions, the strongest of which was repulsion. Mrs. Poyet slid into a position where her eyes could more easily enjoy the curious spectacle before her. Many years of social spoiling had resulted in these present days of pathetic satiety, and this man's temperamental horror of her amused her as nothing else had done for a long time.

"You see, Dr. Pfarre—by the bye, should I say that or professor?"

With eyes on the juniper bush, he replied: "I took my degree of doctor of philosophy in Berlin, and had I remained over there—remained—er—over there—I should have continued the very proper and academic use of the ancient and honorable title of doctor. But one is subject here in this country to an unending series of misunderstandings—so I have altogether abandoned its usage, except when with my colleagues—among my colleagues, you comprehend."

"Ah, I see—but misunderstandings? May I ask?"

"Exactly, exactly! I was once aroused from my very essential sleep

no less than four times in one night at a Southern hotel, assuming that I held the degree of M.D. Most vexatious—most vexatious."

"And could you do nothing?" softly inquired Cloelia.

"Nothing? Oh, yes, I locked my door and gave most positive orders; but only after a very trying struggle each time was I able to reconquer sleep—to reconquer sleep—more absolutely necessary to a student than——"

"I meant the summons for help—it must have been an extreme case." Mrs. Poyet's voice was more restrained.

"It was poison—suicide—some woman—a sordid affair, I gathered the next morning at breakfast. Oxalic acid, I believe."

There was a moment's silence. Then in softest tones the widow asked:

"Is there an antidote?"

"Why, of course," he derided; "chalk, magnesia, plaster knocked from the wall, a lot of other things; but people always lose their heads—always lose their heads at such times."

"You were the only person there who, I dare say, had the faintest idea what should be done?" said she.

"So it appeared," he boasted.

"What became of her?"

"Oh, I believe she died, the waiter told me the next morning."

"Ah!" breathed Mrs. Poyet, shuddering with horror of the man, and then and there her purpose regarding him sank deeper shafts. His cold, brutal selfishness was capable, then, of going unbelievable lengths, once cross the introverted purposes of his life. She felt a sudden dart of fear, and it was with an effort that she again spoke to him.

"Pardon my detaining you. I hesitated naturally to ask Mrs. Conover; but you have lived here so many years your opinion would have great weight in deciding my summer plans. I like it here at The Oaks extremely, aside from being with my friend. I am thinking of giving up my North Cape trip and staying here indefinitely. How is this old house during the hot months? That's really my question."

"Stifling, absolutely stifling!" he burst out, scrambling hastily to his feet and snatching up his portfolio from the lawn.

She ran a white hand over her mouth, but her eyes blazoned her thought.

"But, professor, these old stone houses have such thick walls I should have thought——"

"You are altogether in error, Mrs. Poyet, altogether! The depth of the walls is more than discounted by the wretched—I say wretched—means of ventilation; windows so small and only opening at the bottom; and the—and no attic to shield the—er——"

"What a constitution you must have to have stood it all these years!" she exclaimed, apparently overcome by admiration of his vitality.

"I am, however, feeling it now, in an unwonted mental lassitude and a slight loss of ability to concentrate my mind upon my work," he avowed, turning away.

"You should not think of running further risk, professor; there is too much at stake. Thank you for warning me. I must reconsider it; however, the first summer perhaps I shall not feel it."

From that hour his perfect repose of mind was destroyed. When alone he chuckled mirthlessly at the thought of his instantaneous detection of her obvious purpose—this bold creature who had invaded his abiding-place, hitherto safeguarded through all these comfortable years from similar feminine approaches. No young unmarried woman or widow had ever stayed at The Oaks. It was not a retreat to appeal to youth and gaiety. Hence it followed that this Mrs. Poyet had ulterior motives. He must reinforce his defenses, be ever on the watch, give her no word of encouragement. Soon she would face failure and leave in despair, and the peaceful world would once more be his to command; the warmest corner in winter, the coolest in summer, the easiest chair by the best trimmed lamp, the choicest helpings at the table. Years of pitiless drilling had resulted in habitual solici-

tude for his welfare on the part of the gracious, stately little white-haired hostess, whose trembling hands served all things, whose shrewd old eyes watched all things. The sight of Miss Archibald's slavery to her unwelcome and dominating boarder furnished day by day fresh fuel for Cloelia's mounting hatred of the man.

Nothing could have more utterly amazed Pfarre than to have had his honesty impeached; and yet for five years he had largely filched his keep from Miss Hester's thin, worn, faithful, blue-veined hands, during those long years when pride had kept the Archibalds land-poor and Miss Hester "had a few friends with her for company."

The proud little woman was the oldest living member of a family that had had a brilliant past, and not one foot of the grand old place of her forefathers would she allow to be sold while life was in her.

When the trolley boldly dared pass by her gate it led to a long legal fight before that small slice was cut from her lawn. And she made them pay well for every tree, shrub and square foot of sod that was finally torn from her domain. She was seventy, and the loss of that lawsuit was the tragedy of her whole life. She never went to that end of the sweet old garden nor rode on the trolley line.

When Spark, her ancient white nag, was not lame Miss Hester drove; when Spark was lame she walked. It was not wise to speak to her about the lawsuit, for her usual dignity and repose left her and those blazing old eyes, the round spots of red on the thin cheeks, the quavering voice, made a pathetic picture of unquenchable human passion.

And yet, strong as was her will, as soon as Simon Pfarre had ceased to fear and suspect Miss Archibald's venerable intentions regarding him, after he had taken possession of her large front bedchamber, he at once proceeded to rule the whole household brutally, and had remained triumphant until Cloelia Poyet came one May day to visit her school friend, Joan Conover,

living with her three children at The Oaks during Lieutenant Conover's absence on a three years' cruise on the European station, whither the expense of her young family precluded even a thought of the wife's following.

Professor Pfarre was conscious that his presence had a strong psychic effect upon Mrs. Poyet; but his darting, suspicious little eyes misread the signs, and his life at The Oaks became a perfect purgatory of precaution.

One Sunday morning it turned suddenly very hot. Mrs. Poyet, watching from the veranda, saw the professor, with unheard-of courtesy, escort Miss Hester, attired in her black silk and black straw poke-bonnet, to the gate, where reposed Spark hitched to the ramshackle phaëton, which had a rotatory movement calculated to reduce troubles of the spleen and may have accounted for Miss Archibald's phenomenally good health. As she gathered up the sagging reins and jerked Spark into a preliminary wakefulness the professor said:

"I suppose Mrs. Poyet leaves us this week? Mrs. Conover will greatly miss her friend—greatly miss——"

"Why, no. Have you not heard? She has decided to remain all summer. Of course I am charmed to have her. I should have difficulty in even imagining a sprightlier and more welcome guest in my house. Shall I see you at service?"

"Not this morning," he replied, as he had every Sunday for five years. She listened with a sort of reproachful suavity, inclined her haughty little head, flopped the reins, and Spark threw her long-haired legs about recklessly for a moment, just to show that it was still easily within her power; and then she settled down into her regular going-to-church amble, about which she held conventions as rigid as some of Miss Hester's own.

Pfarre took the next car to the city with lips drawn to a line and eyes half-closed with rage and obstinate resolve.

"Now, as soon as Uncle Torm comes, we'll have church. I told him the first hot Sunday!" cried Joan, flying about

under the trees, placing chairs and stools. Cloelia appeared tugging at an old inlaid Sheraton card-table, much the worse for wear; Joan ran toward her and together they carried it out under the trees, and presently there was placed upon its faded green felt a zither.

Then Joan lifted up her voice and chanted:

"Chil-dren! Come! Ding-dong! The bell is ringing. Roy, Con, Patty! Ah, Cloelia, the deafness of human ears on a Sabbath morn! Of course they want us to hunt for them, the little scalawags!"

"They'll come fast enough as soon as they hear Uncle Torm," replied Cloelia—pronouncing the name as they all did, Maryland fashion—and so it proved. No sooner was there heard coming from the direction of the barn a shrill whistle than out of the house poured the recalcitrant congregation, two boys and a wee fluff of a girl in white, and they disappeared behind the house with unsabbatical shouts.

The two women laughed and sat waiting under the trees. They were both in white, both blond, both tall, but one was a beautiful woman and one was not; and after awhile one saw that the difference lay somewhat in the two souls.

The beautiful young mother had a girl's face, happy-eyed, fresh as the morning, the whole countenance bubbling over with the great joy of being alive and well on a sunny May day. Mrs. Poyet's eyes had been married years ago to disillusion, and cynicism flirted with the corners of her large, flexible mouth—unrest and bitterness brooded everywhere in a strangely attractive, colorless face. Both faces were turned in expectation toward the corner of the graystone, ivy-covered house. Both were stanch friends, each knowing more of the other's life than either guessed; and in each case the knowledge but served to deepen their mutual tenderness. Cloelia's soul had not yet quite reacted from that most corroding of all disappointments—the sordid tragedy of a slowly

disintegrated love for the man she married; a naval officer whom she had followed all over the world, having no children and a fortune of her own. It was through this marriage that Joan had met Lieutenant Conover; when, two years after Cloelia had graduated from their school, Joan—several years younger and in a lower grade—had also gone through that picturesque but inutile function. Joan held pathetic memories of a year of happy letters from her friend from the European station; letters full of poetic enthusiasm, high ideals, the whole-someness of a satisfied heart. Then followed a year of letters from Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe and Yokohama, no longer poetic but gay with satire, witty with dubious antitheses and the merrily sad wisdom of much observation that only flies before the greater wisdom of more observation. Following that was Lieutenant-Commander Poyet's sudden illness and death at the Yokohama Naval Hospital. Then came several years of silence between the friends; and then a note from New York asking if Miss Hester had a vacant corner. Joan's loving heart yearned in silence over the great change in her friend, and she humored all her fantasies however grotesque, however exacting.

On the other side of the gold coin of their friendship Mrs. Poyet saw all around Joan's life; and she, too, found it pathetic in its limitations, its unconsciousness of much outside her tiny horizon, combined with the entire sacrifice of the great social promise of her girlhood to her early marriage to an ensign in the Navy. And here at The Oaks a small income and the growing family always kept her during his cruises, moored in still waters among the reeds. Even when he returned and was stationed on shore, the inherent selfishness of his temperament gave her but further chances for that passionate sacrifice of self that was the keynote of her bountiful nature.

In the symphony of womanhood she had but played over and over again

the largo of motherhood; for her psychical attitude toward even her handsome light-hearted husband was largely maternal. Her exceptional beauty, her talent for and intense love of music, her natural grace, charm and social tact were thrown completely away upon a husband who, when he was with her, gulped with a laugh where he should have sipped with a prayer of gratitude.

Thus far had Cloelia's thoughts roamed when "Torm" Archibald's deep guttural voice preceded him around the corner of the house; and presently he appeared, the children shackling his long legs and arms—a tall man bent with farm work; a kind, keen, laughing face, deeply lined; a certain well-bred awkwardness in every motion; a bachelor with the soul of a father, a man of forty with the heart of a child; a merry creature who lived from hour to hour, and if he had ever had his hour of strong emotion, no one ever knew of it. He lived across the meadows at Mistress Clarice Pattison's place, called Cedarhurst, unfortunately, because, of the evergreen family, only pines would thrive in the immediate vicinity of the house.

"I vow, Roy, if you don't let go of my right leg I'll turn from the popular deacon of our Cathedral of Saint Oak to the coroner thereof—and I'll bury you deep, sirree! Good morning, ladies! You see me encumbered with family cares. Pardon my hat; I'm armless, as you perceive. Ah, Joan, Joan, my girl, what a day to be alive in! The air is our *jubilato Deo*, the light our *benedictus*, the flowers our incense, the thrushes and larks our choristers. Are we not right, Mrs. Poyet, to have our church out of doors today? Or does it shock you as it does Sister Hester? Wait, anyhow, till you see."

A quiet command from the mother had loosened Mr. Archibald's fetters, and he shook hands with Mrs. Poyet and kissed Joan's fair brow. His still boyish eyes dwelt a moment upon her exquisite face, and Cloelia inwardly

thanked goodness that someone at least appreciated Joan's rare loveliness, hidden away from a great world always a-hunger for beauty and as ready as ever the Greeks were to deify it.

"Will the congregation kindly wait till I wind the clocks?" remarked Uncle Tom, as he lounged over to the house in which he was born, and to which he had come every Sunday morning for over twenty years—except when at college—to wind Sister Hester's six clocks. For by ancient tradition all of the Archibald women were forbidden to touch any mechanical contrivance whatever, however shrewd they might prove themselves in other practical matters.

Joan tuned the zither, her head bent low and sideways; the boys' faces were together whispering, and Cloelia watched and wondered if, after all, her friend had not at once grasped the sweet kernel of living, without the weary winnowing from the chaff.

Suddenly little Patty slid from her chair and flew into the house, returning with something very precious shut within her chubby fist—a secret she refused to share even with her brothers. And then Mr. Archibald returned, calling out as he advanced:

"Did I ever tell you the clock story, Mrs. Poyet? Sure? I'm beginning to strike too often myself, and I have to keep a guard on my tongue. Well, Sister Hester has the oldest of many old clocks in the family, on the library mantelpiece. For two hundred and sixty years it did its work soberly, honorably, with only now and then a dignified ailment, soon cured. Its record has been handed down through generations of Archibalds. Seventeen years ago, suddenly one Sunday morning while I was winding it, it went mad! Gad! I was fairly afraid of the thing. It seemed alive and in sudden rebellion against the changes it had lived through, perhaps longing for the old peaceful days, as Sister Hester is, before the trolley came. It was two o'clock when I wound it; and first it

struck fifty-eight times! I sent Rube over at once with a note to Sister Clarice saying I should not think of returning until the emotional turn was over. I spent the afternoon in the library in grandfather's chair, watching. At three o'clock it struck one hundred and forty times!"

"Mr. Archibald!"

"Ask Sister Hester! At four it struck twenty; at five it struck thirty-one furiously, and before I could get to it, off the mantelpiece she went!"

"You fell asleep in grandfather's chair!" expostulated Cloelia.

"I'll go before a notary and pay for the seal myself, any day you name. But the real marvel of the story is that after only a week's doctoring—during which I seldom left the library, such was my concern—it's back in its place and jogging peacefully on, as it did when Louis the Thirteenth was giving all the trouble he could in France, and Cromwell in England. Boys, do you realize that? Poor old thing, no wonder it became *alienée* and had to be treated. Only, mark you, fair ladies, having discovered it to be a female clock I've wired her to the wall safe and sound—wouldn't trust her a moment without."

When the laugh was over there was a short pause and all eyes turned upon Joan. Her light brown hair, hiding gold in the ripples, was parted in the middle and bound low at the back, framing a smooth, broad brow. The proportions of the whole face were faultless, the coloring exquisite, from the dark blue eyes to the red, clearly defined lips. Her full figure, dressed in the simplest of white dimities, ran around the corner of pretty curves wherever one's eye lighted and followed the lines. But, after all, it was the woman's grandeur of soul looking through her eyes, her infinite tenderness hovering about the pure and yet passionate mouth, that set her face apart in one's memory.

Without a trace of self-consciousness she played a few strong arpeggio major chords on her simple little

zither, and then with eyes lifted to the swaying tree-tops she sang:

"Ye days of cloudless beauty,
Hoar frost and summer glow;
Ye groves that wave in spring,
And glorious forests, sing
Alleluia!"

At the last word Uncle Tom's deep bass rumbled out and the high, thin piping of the boys. Patty, ever left behind, finished in a shrill solo, the mother waiting for her each time before going on:

"Wherefore we sing, both heart and voice
awaking,
Alleluia,
And children's voices echo answer making,
Alleluia!"

And long after the others came Patty's little "Alle-loo-la!"

There was a lump in Cloelia's throat, and she wondered if her own life had not been the narrow one and her friend's in no need of her pity.

Selected here and there from the beautiful old service, the little ceremony went on under the great oaks. And when the amens came about Patty was now far in advance, and Uncle Tom's rumbling voice was flecked with the child's shrill amens thrown in at random. But no one chided her, and so no cloud came to the sweet baby eyes, so like her mother's. Then Joan sang, till the birds listened frozen with jealousy, the "Anima Mea"; and then they sang together, birds and all, two simple hymns, and the service was over.

With a sudden change of manner, Joan then said:

"Now for the best and most beautiful thing we've seen, or heard, or learned, since last Sunday. Shall I begin by a lovely new song I've learned for you?"

"And now my baby!" cried Joan, when she had finished.

Patty slid from her chair and slowly opened her little perspiring fist—which she had kept fast closed from first to last—one finger at a time, peering closely the while. When the tiny pink hand lay open before them she gave a cry of dismay at finding only a pale blue smudge where once

was a tiny butterfly treasured by wee fingers unconscious of harm.

The little face fell, a storm was brewing, but her mother drew the child quickly toward her and said:

"You did your best, dear, didn't you? That's all any of us can do. I'll show you what to do next time. It was a beautiful blue, like a bit of the sky; look, sweetheart! look, boys! isn't it wonderful? And now Uncle Tom will say the benediction, and church will be over."

The strange little group stood with bowed heads while the man repeated the stately sentence of dismissal.

Without a word Cloelia left them and went into the house; the children fled back to their play, and Archibald said gently:

"She is not happy, your friend."

The great glow of joy in Joan's eyes clouded for an instant, and she sighed:

"It must be horrible to be unhappy. I have such a terror of unhappiness. I have been—I am so happy, so happy!"

"Happiness is about two-thirds subjective, seems to me. Only one little third is environment. I know wives in the Navy situated as you are, Joan, who fairly radiate discontent and discord."

The woman smiled incredulously.

"Oh, no, Uncle Tom, not as I am! With Rush's love always about me like sunshine? And with my children? With you and all my other friends? Ah, no, you have not looked long enough. No woman could be unhappy."

He smiled down tenderly at the simple, almost shabby dress, the fair fingers roughened with needle pricks, and he held his peace.

II

THE next morning the widow began her active campaign against the professor. Already he was beginning to show the effects of her determined presence upon the battlefield, in an even more oblique contact with humanity than was his wont. His alert eyes

inventoried, upon the threshold, the occupants of a room, and if Mrs. Poyet was within he withdrew. He came irregularly to his meals—long before or long after the others. From the day that Cloelia had spoken to him on the lawn—where half their lives were spent in front or on the south side, according to wind and shadows—Pfarre had invariably continued in the trolley until it reached the “lane” gate, so-called, which led to the barn. Here he alighted, and by a circuitous route around the back of the house reached his room in safety, filled with a dull rage at the indignity forced upon him. His whole home life was now envenomed by his imaginary fight against the aggressions of Cloelia Poyet. That she was bent upon his capture he felt in every tormented fibre, and in the resolve that she should fail he closed his jaws down as a bulldog does, prepared to die before loosening them. The result was a condition of mind hovering disconcertingly between fascinated repulsion and downright malevolence. She watched him through heavy white lids lowered over laughing eyes.

When she found that he was adapting his ways of living to the fact of her presence she roused herself, and it was noticed that she and Mr. Archibald held apart long consultations attended by much laughter; thereby winning abuse from a pouting Joan, who reminded her friend of her expressed theories as to silence in large undertakings. Whereupon Cloelia remarked: “Oh, Uncle Torm is such a scaramouch he doesn’t count.” Joan secretly rejoiced meanwhile that the first silent indifference of her friend was giving way to that something wholesome and sane in the very air at The Oaks.

So when Professor Pfarre that Monday afternoon descended from the car, and was stealthily making his way with bowed head down the narrow lane, and then came face to face with a smiling widow laden picturesquely with great sprays of shad-blow, he suddenly realized that even a profound knowledge of the world’s cosmos avails but little

against the Protean attacks of a petticoated Satan.

A thief caught in the night bending over a jewel-case would have presented much the same spectacle as Simon Pfarre at that moment, and only the halo of tiny white blossoms half-hiding Cloelia’s irregular but charming face made it possible for her to go on. From afar a gaunt figure watched gleefully from the hayloft of the old barn, with explosions of husky laughter.

“Oh, is that you?” cried Mrs. Poyet, apparently a prey to delighted surprise and embarrassment.

“I am—there is an extremely rare form of fungus that I—I have discovered by the barn, and I have been watching its slow—its slow—” the wretched man stammered on.

“I was just thinking of you,” cooed Cloelia. There was not an emotion in him that was not combative, negative, recusant; and she who had fed on approbation most of her life found the novelty of it stimulating, and welcomed gladly even that sensation after several years of emotional deadness, when life had gone on only because it was an endless cable of habits linked hour within hour.

She met his furtive glance with a deep look of clinging admiration that froze the blood in his veins; she sighed polysyllabically; she bit a blossom near her lips caressingly. His haunted little eyes flew about from sky to tree-tops, to hedge, to the dandelions at their feet, and then back again.

“I am going to stay, professor; have you heard? Indefinitely—I do not know exactly why, but I—I am so happy here!” she burst out impulsively. Not one word said he. After her trumps were exhausted his long suit would tell. But she knew the game, too, and paused, beaming upon him. Literally for his fireside he must strike.

“I—er—regret to learn this, as I shall not be here this summer.”

“Oh, Professor Pfarre! Why do you go? I—” she stammered, turned away, and to his horror her voice broke. After one miserable glance at her drooping, graceful figure, he fled without a

word, feeling the spiked embrace of "La Vierge" slowly closing in upon him, impaling, stifling, torturing—relentless! No need in these days of morbid sensibility for the underground dungeon, the chains, the horrid creak of devilish mechanisms!

He sent word to Miss Hester that he should dine in town that night, and back he went down into the sweltering heat, and The Oaks seemed like heaven itself barred against him as he closed the old gate and stood waiting for the clanging, glaring car.

After a judicious wait in the lane, Cloelia sped with lowered head down to the barn, and Uncle Tom shouted a welcome to her, and slid boyishly down the ladder, and they sat upon a bale of hay and made merry together; and Cloelia wondered to hear herself laughing once more, laughing genuinely till the tears came.

A few evenings later, when Pfarre's acutest suspicions were lulled, it so happened that there was held in the vestry of the tiny church a fair, when the yearly heartbreaking effort was made to collect enough money to defray current expenses; the ambition to pay off the first debt having long since died out in the community, after it had been foisted comfortably upon the bishop's weary shoulders.

All at The Oaks made ready to go save little Patty, who was sound asleep, and the professor. Archibald called for them in Sister Clarice's *char-à-banc*, that lady herself being occupied with an "absent treatment" for neuritis. At the moment she was lying with closed eyes and six wax candles, under yellow shades, burning brightly around her. Sister Clarice had an abundance of money and leisure, no children and a preoccupying set of nerves, and her experiments with the ramifications of modern pseudoscience filled her life delightfully, and may have been accountable for her brother Tom's abnormal sense of humor.

After the great hullabaloo of the start was over, and the professor felt convinced that he had the place to

himself, he opened his door—from recent habit, gently—and stole forth. For the first time since the invasion of the crafty widow he felt in command of his rightful kingdom. It was too hot to study—he never read—so dragging a low chair after him from the porch he sought his accustomed place out on the lawn by the mock-orange bushes, away from the trees, where the south wind whispered all summer long its evening falsehood about the morrow.

He loosened his collar and unbuttoned his white waistcoat, pushed up his cuffs, ran a nervous hand through his thick hair and faced the breeze with a deep sigh of contentment.

No, it would take more than an impudent, designing young woman to rout him out of this nest, fashioned to his liking. Perhaps he should be compelled to go for a few short weeks, just to put her off the scent; and then after she left he had but to double on his tracks, and beyond that surely even her pride would protest. And the soothing thought put him to sleep.

He awoke with a jerk to find seated on a low stool beside him a figure in white, which, as he started erect, broke into that low, caressing laugh he had learned so dearly to hate. He sat mechanically buttoning his waistcoat and his mind against her, his hands trembling violently.

"I came back," she murmured.

"I—I see."

"Shall I tell you why, or only a fib?" she coaxed in a tone that made him writhe.

"It is obviously—obviously no affair of mine," grunted the distracted man of science.

"Oh, but it is!" caroled the lady.

Heavenly powers! was he to be compelled to fly, or to sit there helpless because the creature wore petticoats? No, he'd hold his ground and have it out with her once for all, frankly, brutally. Shrinking from her as far as possible, even his feet drawn under his chair, he sat ready for the fight, facing straight in front of him. There was something in his attitude that suddenly revealed to her the fact that at

the root distrust of himself was stronger in him than distrust of her, and from that moment she knew convincingly that victory would in the end be hers.

"Professor, has one a right to be happy in this life? Not privilege—I mean right. You who know so much, surely you can help me. One instinctively seeks analogy from nature in these human problems, nature who has remained nearer the mandates of Genesis: 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Am I not right, professor?" The immodesty of her cosetting tone was all that he assimilated of what she said, and his jaws were rigid.

"Nature, you see, created the foolishness of flowers, as well as edible vegetables; and she need not, you know. Nature, you will admit, is on the side of happiness—the darling old, extravagant, wasteful thing! If she hadn't that blessed streak of nonsense in her the sun would have tumbled headlong to rest without all those evening fireworks in the west. When you think of it, it's man who has poked about and made things useful; nature just makes them beautiful and trusts to luck. Don't you think so?"

What was the woman aiming at? In his heart he felt like arising and striking her; in reality the brute in him said:

"I never discuss serious matters with women."

After a gasp she went on sweetly, her words fairly nestling against him and turning him sick with despair.

"Ah, I quite understand. We are too emotional, too much the creatures of our senses. We have only love's intuitions, love's courage, love's patience to wait—and hope."

He wiped his face and hands and wished he was dead.

"You—women talk a great deal—talk a great deal of nonsense, first and last. Science sees only usefulness in beauty—you can't separate them," he said in a strained voice.

Cynthia laughed, shivering a little at his brutalities, and then pressed on:

"We women don't mind being called nonsensical, because after all aren't all the things in life that are at all worth while—that? Music, poetry, art—everything, once assured of bread, clothing and shelter. The soul took the form of a butterfly, not a bee." There was a pause; she leaned toward him and murmured:

"What a beautiful night! And the honeysuckle—do you catch it? As you do not smoke you still have the feminine susceptibility to odors."

What business was it of hers that he had had catarrh for twenty years—the hussy! He watched her fearsomely, safe in the half-light. A determined woman near to him, in some soft, thin, white stuff that clung to her in a devilish way; silence, isolation, moonlight—he slowly drew his feet out from under his chair, that he might the more easily gain the use of them in an emergency.

It was high time, for he felt rather than saw her arise and with apparent impulse drag her stool a foot or two nearer, and, with an abandon that made him gasp, she said:

"Confess now, professor, that a woman who isn't a little foolish—just a little—is a sort of ethical cripple." He had never fought the battles of the salon, he had not advanced much beyond the stone age socially, and Cloelia felt there was small need of any conversational ballistics, when she heard his return fire:

"I have never had occasion to give the whole subject—the whole subject a moment's thought."

"Ah, that's just it! That's just why I stayed at home tonight; just why I have been saying all this 'nonsense' to you. For I see—I feel so keenly—that you have put happiness, woman, pleasure, nature, out of your life—and may I say something very, very personal? I know—I know absolutely as a woman does—that you are terribly, terribly lonely!"

No pity for him entered the young woman's heart, crowded full of pictures of his brutal selfishness, his sly theft of privilege, his greed, his long

getting for little much from frail, courteous old hands. Miss Hester would never give expression to her gratitude if relieved of the incubus, but Brother Tom vouched for it, and a marvel of a man, called Admiral Sproull, would at once, it appeared, take the vacated room. So Cloelia sighed, turned away her head, wiped from her eyes imaginary tears, enjoying her little theatricals hugely, but longing for Tom Archibald's applauding eyes. And so it came to pass that she was not aware that Pfarre had slowly dragged himself to his feet and had taken a step toward her, looking down at her bowed head, with clenched hands, trembling violently, hypnotized by hate, despair and a something that was far from being so gentle a thing as love, but had the lure of all things forbidden and barred. He looked about furtively, took one step nearer to her, begrudged by every atom of his morbid being; he moistened his lips to speak, but his breath came in gasps. She sat instantly erect at the sound so unexpectedly near to her, and, looking up into his face, sprang to her feet, cowering away from him.

With a groan he fled to the house. The ousting of the Ph.D. was assured, but Cloelia's laugh had gone, and as she walked up and down her room within locked doors she whispered to herself:

"Why am I fated to see the worst—always the very worst?—I, who only long for the pretty, polished, smiling surface of life!"

All that night like a thief Simon Pfarre crept about the house, silently gathering his belongings together, while the household above him slept.

By four he was packed. By half-past five he had seen the old colored cook, who hated him, had his last cup of her perfect coffee and left a note for Miss Archibald telling her he was hurriedly called away to Baltimore to remain indefinitely and leaving directions for the forwarding of his trunks. By a quarter-past six he slipped past the mock-orange bushes and took the

first down-going trolley from the lane gate.

The Ph.D. was evicted, but Uncle Tom was disappointed in Mrs. Poyet's reserved account of the last act of their comedy.

After Miss Hester had recovered from her bewildered astonishment and self-accusations for imaginary neglect of her old guest, her brother insinuated the subject of Admiral Sproull.

In a few days one of Miss Hester's dainty, old-fashioned notes on cream, satin-finished paper found its way to the retired officer's hands. Smiling, he read:

Rear-Admiral Philip Sproull, U. S. Navy.

DEAR SIR: Bearing in mind your oft-repeated desire to become a member of my household, I beg a moment of your valuable time to inform you that, through fortuitous and altogether unexpected circumstances, the opportunity presents itself to offer you my largest first-floor bedchamber—the one where your father used so often kindly to come and read to my poor father during his last painful years of life. My only other guests at present are Mrs. Conover, wife of my nephew Rush, and her three well-conducted children; and, temporarily, a friend of hers, widow of a naval officer. A very harmonious group of young people I feel assured you will find them. I feared this summer my waning strength would prohibit me from the pleasure of entertaining guests, but Providence has ordered otherwise out of His bounty. Hoping that we may soon have the distinguished pleasure of seeing you, I beg, with kind regards, to subscribe myself

Most cordially yours,
HESTER FIELDING ARCHIBALD.

THE OAKS.

"Lord love the sweet old thing!" the admiral exclaimed aloud, getting up from his particular armchair at the open club window. There was only about six years' difference between their ages in his favor, but he took a man's base advantage in such matters.

Philip Sproull had been the beauty man of his class at the Academy, and had cheerfully graduated at the foot, in all but social prowess. That fact being true, it was difficult to understand his unfortunate marriage, which had left him, at sixty-four, childless, stranded, utterly homeless in the world save for his club; "just one of the Navy's professional pallbearers for the rest of my

life," as he put it. He had had two years of it and much standing bare-headed with other retired officers under hot suns or chilly rains, during which period he besought Miss Hester to take pity upon him and furnish him the excuse of non-residence in the Capital.

As long as breath was in his body it would remain a very handsome one—tall, spare, broad-shouldered, with almost his cadet waist measure; a face clean-shaven; keen, dark eyes, a little sad from much seeing; a decidedly haughty face, belied by a mouth which when it smiled gave away the whole gentle secret of his character.

He lost no time—with plenty to throw away gratefully—in replying in person to Miss Hester's note. Cloelia was beside their hostess under the trees when the retired admiral presented himself, and so delightedly overheard the whole conversation between the two. She rejoiced at their old-fashioned elaborated courtesies, which left nothing unexpressed, their mutual ignoring of all reference to the question of remuneration. He was to be the honored friend and guest of an extremely pleased hostess, joining her house party for the summer. At the end of each month he would find a beautifully written bill upon his chiffonier. He would pay it by cheque, left in the drawing-room upon her wonderful old "Kettle" desk mounted in brass with a "secret place" about which the children whispered, but for which they dared not search.

And so no word passed between them on the disturbing subject of money, but soon after the instalment of Admiral Sproull in the place of a certain man of learning the level of living at The Oaks was raised. His fees were liberal, he kept his horses and a carriage as a self-respecting sailor must when he "strikes the beach" to stay. His coachman was his old colored steward, who resigned from the Navy upon the admiral's retirement, and having been a jockey in his youth, fell upon his feet when he went to the Army and Navy Club and began wheedling his old commanding officer

to find him something to do that would attach him to the service of the beloved person. To complete a picturesque *entourage* the admiral's body-servant was Yunosuke, a Japanese student who read Dante obliquely as he blacked "dannasan's" many pairs of boots of a morning out on the well-house steps.

So an altogether glorious regime began at The Oaks. The little hostess gave orders that her three Sheffield trays with the grapevine border should be used every day now, instead of only on Sunday. Also her George III silver teapot; and but for the fact that Serafina the maid threatened to leave, Miss Hester would have used her Crown Derby plates every Sunday night at supper! No intelligent servant would have such responsibilities thrust upon her needlessly, with a quondam naval steward waiting for her down by the ice-house while she hurriedly washed up the supper things.

Miss Hester sought to atone for the eclipse of the Crown Derby by wearing at dinner her cap of Cluny lace with faded violet ribbons. All of this almost feverish display was in response to that something in the handsome, courtly admiral which somehow demanded one's best. Mrs. Poyet laughingly wore her hitherto unpacked prettiest gowns and tucked roses in Joan's hair and belt, and dinner became quite a festivity, with the cause of it all in immaculate dinner clothes, a flower in his button-hole, Yunosuke behind his chair in silken native dress, silently anticipating the many wants of the old naval autocrat. The entire household soon frankly adored him, from Miss Archibald to Patty; just as his squadron had in the days of his command, from his gray-haired chief-of-staff down to the youngest jack-of-the-dust whose shy salutation he punctiliously returned.

Nothing seems to draw two people more quickly together than the discussion of a third person, even if not in terms of belittlement,

The admiral took his place at once in Joan's heart through long sympathetic talks about Cloelia Poyet, whose over-developed, disillusioned nature he seemed at once to comprehend.

Then the two young women would foregather and dissect the admiral after he had left every afternoon, bound for his club, at two o'clock, with pathetic regularity.

Cloelia one day declared: "What's the sense of mincing matters? We're all in love with him, down to Patty, who refuses to wear any but her biggest butterfly bows on her topknot. Well, he's a sort of dethroned king, after all, as all retired admirals are—little kings for awhile, circled with their elaborate court etiquette, their glittering staff of officers, their special flags flying to let other fleets know that they are 'in residence,' their solitary barges, their supreme power over thousands, subject much more to their will than in many a constitutional monarchy. Yes, and hail-fellow-well-met with their crowned peers. Oh, you ask Admiral Sproull! I don't believe there's a ruler in Europe, nor many in Asia, with whom he has not broken bread and sipped that liquid diplomacy—champagne!"

Then Joan protested: "Perhaps that may be why we all do dress up for him, I'll admit, Cloelia, but that's not why we love him. It's the perfection of his breeding, the absolute harmony between his acts and his words and the great, loving heart of the dear old man under it all!"

Then Cloelia sniffed: "It's high time Rush Conover came home!" and so it ended always in a laugh.

The third conversational combination was between Cloelia and Sproull, striving to outdo each other in their admiration for Joan the Beautiful. The division came when the admiral flatly refused to pity Joan, to see aught but cause for rejoicing in her small horizon.

"But women like that belong to the world, admiral! the poor dreary old beauty-loving world, always hungry

for an *édition de luxe* of womanhood. It's a ghastly waste."

"Confound the world, madam—if you'll pardon an old fellow's vehemence! Satiety, not hunger, is the matter with the heartless, thankless jade. I know you young people do not read Pope, but with your permission I'll quote him at you ne'ertheless:

"How happy is the blameless Vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

"And he also says," cried Mrs. Poyet quickly:

"The mouse that always trusts to one poor
hole
Can never be a mouse of any soul!"

The admiral arose and bowed low before her; then, reseating himself leisurely in his Hong Kong bamboo chair—always placed by Yunosuke, on fair days, out on the lawn beside Joan's work-table and Cloelia's hammock—he continued:

"The 'ghastly waste' you spoke of a moment ago, my Lady Poyet, would only come if our beautiful Mrs. Conover *did* go out into the world a prey to jaded eyes and ears and tongues touched with the poison of seduction. Women would not believe in the child's innocency; men would worship it and at the same time seek to destroy it. Only bored when they succeed—but this is no manner of talk with a sprig of a girl like you! A thousand pardons, my lady." He had called her so from the first.

"Ah, admiral, your lady is a thousand years old. One lives a score of years in one sometimes," sighed she.

"Poor lady!" he said gently, leaning over and patting her hand dangling over the hammock's brim. "I know, I know! but, my dear child, one's sense of proportion comes very late in life. One only gets hold of a good recipe for living somewhere about forty; so much judgment for so much enthusiasm, one spoonful of exactions to two of forgiveness and a pinch of folly thrown in."

"It'll come earlier to me," said Mrs. Poyet grimly, and he chuckled:

"Perhaps, but I doubt it—you're too apt to forget the forgiveness and the enthusiasm and the humor of it all, I fear. *Ride si sapis* has been my motto for thirty years. But I'm told it's very bad taste to throw a bit of Latin or French nowadays into one's conversation. I must stop it. It's the age when it's the sign of blood and breeding to put one's worst foot forward—hobnailed and without polish! I am not yet convinced that your generation is an improvement on mine, madam," laughed he.

"Since I've met you, sir, I have abandoned the argument!" quoth she.

"Lorelei, bent upon wrecking an old craft on its last voyage!" he exclaimed, shaking a finger at her. She felt, while she was with him, as if she had stepped out of a Lancet and was chatting in the sunshine, bepowdered and bepatched, décolleté, in pink brocade, a spaniel and a peacock near. It was always a shock to open her sleepy eyes and find starched cuffs instead of lace ruffles at the admiral's wrists. She liked these talks amazingly well, and Tom Archibald sulked at Cedarhurst for a whole week after the invasion of the conquering Navy. And by the time she had placated his vanity and made the two men heartily renew an old liking, the ugly little bare spot in her own heart was beginning to be covered with tender green things that wound in and out and whispered of a blossoming time.

One day Joan received a letter from her husband written in Venice, part of which she read to Mrs. Poyet. They were sitting together in the library, a shower having driven them indoors.

"Isn't he a perfect dear, Cloelia? Listen to this:

"I am sending my best girl a little present I picked up in Malta a few weeks ago. It was a bargain, so don't fret yourself—nor scold me. Is five yards enough to do anything with? The woman in the shop told me it was what was left over of an order from an Italian princess. I'm sending it over to you by our navigator, Gus Trenly (great chum of mine). His time is up, and he's ordered home. Leaves on the next steamer from Genoa. He's a pretty gay sort of chap in a gentlemanly way—not

your style of man in the least, except that he's fond of the same sort of funeral music that you are. However, I'd like you to be nice to him; but for pity's sake don't let Aunt Hester ask him to dinner, and don't let the children crawl all over him. He's not that kind of a man. Love to the shavers, and my compliments to the disdainful Poyet. Only ten months more and then we'll break out our homebound pennant and steer straight for Sandy Hook and—you. By the bye, the captain's wife is in Nice. She's what the boys call a stunner, and lively isn't the word. I'm one of her pets, and you ought to see me fetch and carry for her ladyship. Of course, it's just a little policy game on my part."

There was a short pause before either again spoke, and then Joan said softly, stooping lower over her endless sewing:

"I wonder if she's dark or light?"

Cloelia stared at her a moment, wondering, and then she laughed, exclaiming:

"Jealous, by all the powers!"

Joan looked up, flushed and conscious, her sweet eyes full of tears, and nodded assent.

"I'm jealous of every woman he writes about in all of his letters the whole three years of his cruise; even married women—did you ever hear of such foolishness?"

"Once or twice," said Cloelia, her cynical eyes resting upon her friend. "Many couples are only married when they are together, my dear; and few married women consent to being considered altogether innocuous!"

Joan burst out passionately: "Don't say such things to me, Cloelia! It shrivels me like a frost. I cannot stand it, with Rush there, and with me tied here hand and foot!"

"Silly, silly Joan! *You*, jealous of anything feminine alive! The prettiest thing in the world today! Why, Joan, if you had been set in the right country and the right century nations would have gone to war about you, painters crossed swords to get you on their maligning canvases, and as to lovers—my dear, they would have been raked away in the early morning from under your windows like dead leaves."

"Cloelia Poyet!" laughed Joan, responding like a child to a little help over a rocky place.

The widow swept on: "But no, you must needs pick out a stupid century, given up—soul and body—to the pursuit of speed; and you must needs marry before you're eighteen an ensign with a golden smile and a copper income!"

"Rush is the best husband in the world," cried his loyal mate.

"Of course, of course! I've met 'the best husband in the world' by the hundred! I know him. All the same he spikes you down here with three little screws: Roy, and Con, and Patty; and then off he sails, free as the wind, and—and buys Maltese lace in the land of its birth, fresh from a princess's excess. The difference!"

"He sends it to me."

"Contented little 'me'! Oh, I'd have you at the very least a duchess, and rule Britain with a smile, instead of sitting here throwing your smiles away on Roy's pajamas! It makes me wild! Joan Conover, shall I tell you the visions I have of you? Listen. I'd have you the chatelaine of some grand old castle in England. Warwick! that's the setting for you. That great low-ceilinged room looking down toward the bonnie Avon, resplendent with those world-famous Van Dycks and old Guy's armor. You know the room I mean? Pardon me, dearest heart, I forgot you were not with me that day; you always are in spirit, and sometimes I forget. There is where I see you in creamy white velvet, standing with the light falling on those shoulders and arms fit to turn a marble Venus into *verde antique* with envy. There's a deep fall of—let me see—grounded Venetian point—so few can wear it—and opals and diamonds just caked all over your breast and hair; and standing all about you are princes, and poets, and painters, and statesmen, and the women in the corners are pale under their rouge, cold and sick with jealousy, and yet they——"

"Leather and prunello!" cried a deep voice behind them.

"Admiral!" cried both women in

consternation, Cloelia blushing guiltily as his dark eyes met hers in reproach, and knowing she would catch a mental drubbing before she slept that night. To whisper the faintest word of discontent in the ear of the happy young mother at The Oaks she knew the admiral held to be no less a thing than criminal.

"In the first place, I have found that women fairly revel in each other's beauty, and hold it very much more highly than ever we men do—witness your own ravings, Mrs. Poyet! Take an old man's word for it, Mistress Joan Conover, after everything is said, and seen, and heard, and tasted, and done—the good-night kiss of sleepy little Patty lying in your arms is worth it all a hundredfold. Pay no heed whatever to this Calypso here, singing men and women to their ruin!"

Then he left them abruptly, and presently Cloelia arose in silence, and taking an umbrella she wandered forth, and opening the gate walked down the road in the rain, now reduced to a fitful sprinkle.

When left alone Joan dropped her work and sat perfectly still by the window, looking out at the dripping trees and shrubs, and she dreamed dreams of greatness as did another Joan moving on toward her fate.

Ah! to be perfectly dressed from head to foot all at once, sure of herself all around—just once! Not as it always had been with her—the shoes a little worn just when she had been able to buy fresh gloves, and they fresher than her veil; a new gown achieved just as the hat was out of date; a short skirt when all the world wore long; large sleeves just as the fashion changed. She had always laughed at the absurdity of it until today. How she had all her life long loved lace—"devil's cobwebs"—some-one had called it once in her hearing. And sable to nestle her chin into—the splendid "feel of the thing"! Once in a shop she had tried on a boa, and she smelt the lordly odor of the sable yet. The happiness that had never come to her of looking as Cloelia said; and

then glancing over the heads of the princes, and poets, and statesmen, and seeing Rush standing in the doorway, the dear, handsome, pleasure-loving face; the strong, sinewy figure all in the braveries of uniform—and she would laugh and sweep them all aside and hold out her arms and run to him, in the old way. She smiled and flushed at the very thought of how he would tease, and deride, and burlesque his admiration—and so somehow belittle it—as he always did. Then she arose and wandered to the open door and stood leaning, with eyes on the golden horizon, the rain at an end. The cool freshness passed over her brow like a mother's hand, and her vision changed. No, it was not her body that needed richer raiment; she could go contentedly to the end dressed in the shabby compromise between her ideal and her purse; it was her soul that longed for the "purple and fine linen" of music and art. Towering always above every other desire was this young woman's longing to hear the world's great music, for she had never but once heard any in all her life. When home Rush liked the theatre, and there was not money for both. The real poison left in Joan's fancy that afternoon by Mrs. Poyet's fairy tale lay in that—the power of money to open all musical doors and to let that great flood of ecstasy into her soul, as it came that one and only night set forever apart in her memory, when someone sent her a ticket for the symphony concert. Rush had taken her to the hall and left her, calling later for her after an evening at the Army and Navy Club. So she had sat alone in a tumult of strange emotions, swept clean off her feet by one of Beethoven's surging seas of sound. And when it was over she found she was trembling and icy cold to the finger-tips. More than one pair of masculine eyes watched the changing wonder of her face and pondered why this rare creature should be thus alone, and inwardly chafed at the conventions that no longer allowed a voluntary knight-

errantry to be offered when it seemed expedient.

But Joan herself was in a dream, and only awoke when later she clung excitedly to Rush's arm and thanked him as they walked home together for all the trouble he was taking to give her pleasure, the great depth of which she kept from him, lest in some way it might seem a reproach for past omissions or a demand upon the future. For Joan's jewels were those of her character: her tact, her intuition, her sympathy, courtesy and refinement.

"I wonder if Cloelia is right," she murmured, settling herself on the stone porch and once more returning to her mending; "am I only half alive? I wonder which is best? Are we put into the world to develop each his own being to its uttermost limit, as she says; or to do the little good that is nearest and love much, as the admiral says?"

And the answer came with the doubt. There was a shout in the hall and presently Patty, breathless, hot, dirty, tired enough to long suddenly for a little cuddling, climbed into the mother's lap and begged to be hugged, oh, tight, tighter! till the baby gave a little scream of delight and at once felt rested.

"Muzzer, how much do you love Patty?"

"As much as the flowers love the sunshine, pet," and that was the right answer, word for word, as expected. As Joan held the child closely to her breast the old contentment with things as they were returned to her, for the last time in such abundant measure and in such flawless perfection.

III

ONE exquisite fresh June morning about ten days later the admiral pronounced the grass free from dew, and immediately after breakfast Joan bustled busily forth to her old place on the lawn almost under the two little Judas trees, whom she had laughingly dared to do their worst. It was her "letter day," and all the world held aloof while

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she dashed off the bi-weekly, many-sheeted document that carried to her husband the endless tale of her still vital love and a mother's wonder at the growing mystery of unfolding childhood at her knee.

It was very hot, with the humidity of Potomac borderland, and Joan wore an old white lawn—surpliced-necked for coolness—a belt of white ribbon clasping her full round figure, the dull gold buckle of which was the only touch of color about her. At her breast was pinned a spray of Lady Banksia roses, for it had been Roy's day to bring the flower for his mother to wear, and he was just beginning to realize her beauty and to have decided opinions as to what was becoming to her.

"Niobe before her life's grief began," muttered Admiral Sproull to himself, watching her as he took his morning exercise exactly as he had for over forty years, a poop-deck promenade, back and forth sixty times between the moss rosebush and the Japanese quince. It took twenty minutes, and that was enough for any man. His hands were behind him, his head bent until he reached the end of his beat, then he occasionally raised his eyes and swept a peaceful horizon.

Habit was so strong with the old sailor that it simply never entered his head to roam off in any one continuous direction as might a mere landsman, in search of sport or variety of scene. Waffles—his dog on many a cruise—at first felt compelled to attend upon the heels of his master when he would arise and put on his hat after breakfast, and the little terrier did so with the usual canine excesses of manner and voice. Now he came mournfully, a disillusioned dog, and followed at the admiral's heels for several lengths, doing his duty perfunctorily, sometimes even hopefully. Then as the strange tramp went on that led to nothing Waffles would drop out of ranks and sit apart watching and pondering upon this new human phenomenon, now and then even barking out his scorn of so profitless, objectless a performance—and the woods full of chipmunks and the fields alive with

jack-rabbits! He was in the midst of one of his protests, and for a change was wailing it out in long howls, his sad eyes on the tall figure tramping relentlessly before him, when the gate slammed. Waffles considered himself thereby relieved from duty, and flew to his post.

A slight, medium-sized man, with a dark, close-cropped pointed beard, stepped inside the gate and evidently said exactly the right thing to Waffles, for the terrier ran around in rings of hysteric approval for a moment and then flew to tell the children.

The friendly intruder glanced at the unconscious form bent over the low table under the trees, and then went on down the pebbled path to the front door. To do so he had to pass near the admiral. The two men exchanged glances, and the stranger's dark face lighted up with recognition and he stopped.

"Pardon me, sir, but am I not addressing Rear-Admiral Sproull?" he asked in a wonderfully pleasant voice.

"Yes, sir," briefly said the other, with the noncommittal air of the officer of the deck at the gangway.

"I had the honor, admiral, of cruising in your squadron on the South Atlantic eight years ago."

"Indeed? You have the advantage of me in memory; I regret to say I do not recall your name—and yet, wait a minute! I've got it! Your name is Trenly, G. Trenly—only you never used to wear a beard. It's that beard that stumped me for a moment, for I never forget an officer of my squadron." Out went the admiral's hand, enchanted with himself and hence pleased with everyone else.

"You are perfectly right, sir, I wore none in those days. Your memory would pass the most exacting board, admiral."

The two officers stood a moment smiling at each other, and then the younger fell into step and the commander-in-chief went on with his morning exercise, delightedly listening to news fresh from the European station. Suddenly he stopped short.

"By Jove, Trenly, I'm keeping you! You didn't call to see me, and here I've appropriated you, body and soul! Ah, my boy, my heart's in the old service—it's good to see one of you youngsters again, fresh from my old sweetheart—the sea."

"Had I known you were here I should have given myself the pleasure of calling upon you, sir; but as it is, I am seeking a shipmate's wife—Mrs. Conover," said the other.

"That is she over there, under the trees. Come, I will present you to her."

So together the two men crossed the lawn and joined Joan. As soon as she caught the name her face and manner flamed into a sudden extraordinary interest; she sprang to her feet and went toward him as a child might, her eyes dancing with pleasure, her hand out, her whole figure bending toward him in a welcome that left his heart beating—being a man, and young, and just home from a world of men. With one sweep of her arm Joan cleared the chair next hers, exclaiming in her bell-like voice:

"Sit down here, Mr. Trenly. I have waited so long for you! I have so much to say, to ask. It has seemed an age since Rush wrote about your coming. I've sat where I could see the gate ever since, until today—isn't that always the way?"

She had resealed herself, her superb figure erect, her smiling eyes clinging to those of her husband's messenger, with an interest entirely vicarious as yet, but charged with danger—and the admiral turned away chilled with a sudden sense of impending shadow.

"Don't go, admiral, please. I'll call Yunosuke to bring out your chair. He's late today, or perhaps I'm very early. I'm sure you two will find much to talk about. Just fancy, Mr. Trenly, he has only us—Mrs. Poyet and me!"

The lieutenant stood behind his chair, and as his laughing eyes met the older man's he said:

"Admiral Sproull can command all but my pity."

The retired officer bowed, and pres-

ently walked away. Meeting Cloelia on the porch, he broke out:

"Is it possible Mrs. Conover does not realize the effect of her beauty? Can't she see that a woman fashioned as she is has no business to fly at a young fellow as she did just now, her whole soul in her hand, and expect him to remember she's got a mythical husband somewhere up her sleeve!"

The widow laughed impishly while he explained, and replied in triumph:

"Go to her then, by all means, admiral, and say, 'Mrs. Conover, you must not be so outrageously pretty. It will never do, madam! Cultivate austerity of manner and speech, that men's heads may remain upon men's shoulders.' Shall I tell you what would happen? She'd look you in the face with those great, flower-like eyes of hers, and she'd say, 'Why, I'm a married woman!' and then where would you be, sir? No, she knows no more than Patty of life's possibilities; but that is as you wished it to be. That's your theory, remember, mine being that the armor of knowledge is a woman's only shield. It remains to be seen which of us is her wiser friend."

"There'll be the devil to pay some day, as sure as heaven's above us! A woman like that shouldn't be deserted for three years; it's not fair to—to the rest of us!"

"Exigencies of the service!" mocked the widow.

"It won't do at all! It must be stopped, somehow. Deuce take it, peace of mind flies before women as fog before the midday sun!"

She laughed merrily in his face, and he stormed back at her, and gave further fruitless orders, and then he seized his hat and umbrella and went to town before luncheon; an unheard-of thing, and quite senseless, in all that heat.

In the meantime Lieutenant Trenly sat and watched Mrs. Conover and wondered how her husband could be satisfied with the several poor, cheap photographs of this glorious creature which, among others, adorned his cabin on the ship. Her absolute un-

consciousness of self, her innocent desire to please from sheer loveliness—never for an instant did he misread it, having a worldly man's almost infallible instinct about women before vanity or love steals his wits away. Trenly thought a little grimly of his own empty life, his lonely return to his native land, after three years' absence.

To her he was only Rush's *commis-sionnaire*, fresh from hearing the dear voice, touching the beloved hand; nevertheless the sweet love-light in her violet-blue eyes was a disturbing thing to face for a man straight from three years of sea life.

He had intended to stay fifteen minutes, deliver his package from Conover and leave as quickly as he decently could. He had brought parcels home to wives of brother officers before, scores of times, and he knew of no greater bore. They generally, poor things, made him stay to luncheon, and sometimes drove him to cemeteries afterward on pleasure bent, in good American fashion.

But this time it was different. He had never seen such beauty as this woman's, and he had never seen such girlish ecstasy as when he handed her the package of lace and she opened it—he had to laugh aloud, and yet somehow it was infinitely pathetic to him. So he stayed and gave her an expurgated account of the cruise in the wardroom. She had met very few naval officers, because when Rush was on duty at a navy yard he had boarded in some inexpensive suburb; none but the few heads of departments having quarters in the yard. She had never gone to any of the naval festivities because, when on shore duty, Rush Conover suddenly turned into a dull, hard-working husband and father. Without actually intending to be a hypocrite, he led a double life; one on land, a devoted benedick, and quite another at sea, a bachelor free as air, a leader of cotillions in one round of pleasure in every port where they anchored; most of it, after all, harmless and always controlled by the old question of pinching economy—but, then, Joan was a won-

derful manager! And so it was the keenest pleasure to them both to talk on together under the rustling old oaks beside the Judas trees. And then he must—simply must—see Rush's children, and would he wait till she found them? Yes, he would wait—certainly; delighted. So she floated over to the house and gathered together her jewels and rubbed and scrubbed them into an abnormal presentableness, and came forth again flushed and breathless, Roy stalking in his sailor-suit in front, the mother leading the other two, all solemnly staring at "father's friend."

And again a sharp pang ran through Trenly's heart at this fair vision, the fairest in the world in a man's eyes, be he good, or bad, or just the average. The dear sweetness of it all! tired of men and ships, and in one of his old hungers for a good woman's love, children and a home. So Gustavus Trenly stayed on, indifferent to engagements, never having been a man to turn his back on an hour's happiness.

Patty was on his knee, a boy at either hand, the mother's fair head before him, again bent over her sewing, when Serafina announced luncheon, and he sprang to his feet, astonished at one of those sudden little spurts of a generally crawling Time familiar to us all.

Then Cloelia wandered forth, and after one look into her knowing eyes his hour in fairyland came to an end abruptly. Presently came also Miss Hester, who approached and extended an old-fashioned wordy welcome to a guest's guest, and so he stayed to luncheon, and it was after three o'clock when they all walked to the gate with him and saw him off, from Joan to Waffles.

And he went feeling that he had had a dream of paradise, and he wondered at Rush Conover and his ways.

The widow told the admiral all about it that night after dinner, and stoutly declared that if there was any evil in it it lay in his own imagination, else the Turks had the right of it! The old man regarded her with dis-

content for awhile and then left her; a man's vocabulary in talking to a woman is such a crippled thing, hobbling always in silly circles!

That same day Mrs. Poyet would unconsciously do Joan a harm, the admiral felt convinced; the former, he realized, having one of those cold natures so often misread by aliens, who mistake the sensibility of American women for passion. To convince a woman of that type of the possibility of danger to a woman of quite another type required a more brutal vocabulary than Admiral Sproull had ever allowed himself in the society of ladies. And, after all, it was only a prophetic feeling of his own so far; perhaps some day he would very gently speak to Mrs. Conover himself—since Mrs. Poyet refused.

No one but Joan was surprised to see Mr. Trenly when he appeared the very next Sunday afternoon, looking a little conscious for the first ten minutes, but assisted by pockets full of oblation for the children, which won for him another pathetic outburst from their mother. She had never been thrown enough with strangers to learn to regulate a distinctly perfervid manner, happiness and a busy, contented mind having preserved to her a marvelous youthfulness. Generous, giving more than she ever received always, objective in thought, wholly healthy in mind and body, full of laughing joyousness—a miracle of loveliness—she came like a revelation to this man of the sea whose heart was unfed at the roots, but who bore enshrined in the secret places of his soul, as every man does to the end, his ideal of womanhood.

Uncle Tom had stayed all day over at The Oaks, as Sister Clarice had gone over to Baltimore to try vibration massage for insomnia; all of which he stated with the utmost gravity, successfully challenging even Cloelia's quizzical glance to make him forget the courtesies due the interesting sufferer.

So it was he who suggested after the early supper that they should all

wander off to the woods together, to which they joyfully assented—all but the admiral, who refused to budge from his comfortable chair and the leisurely perusal of Grammont's memoirs. Waffles remained faithful, but suffering, beside his master's chair; yet when he heard the shouts of the children getting more and more faint he could not withhold a gentle whine. The admiral peered over his pince-nez at the unhappy wrinkled face of his little friend, laughed and said, "Go, Waffles, go!" and away the four feet scampered, stark mad with joy.

They wandered about and found the azalea, and the yellow dogwood, and the tiny wild pansies, and the late long-stemmed violets, and the early purple orchis. And Mrs. Poyet and Archibald quarreled and laughed and quarreled again, with Joan and Mr. Trenly for audience. The children and Waffles alone were serious with the unsmiling gravity of early animal life.

Once Joan's hat and hair became tangled in an obstinate bramble, and there she sat under the high-arching blackberry vines, and Cloelia had to loosen for her the great coils of golden brown hair to get her free; and sitting there, cowering and laughing, covered by the glory of her hair, the eyes of the two men dwelt upon her and then met guiltily, and Uncle Tom alone had the courage of his admiration, crying aloud:

"If I see many more of your phases, Joan, as I'm a sinner I shall become a convert to polyandry, and cable defiance to Rush Conover, even if he be my nephew."

On their way home, after they had left the sweet places in the woods and were in the rolling meadowland, Joan wandered on ahead of the others, singing to herself, as was her habit. Her white figure seemed on fire against the western sky, silhouetted on the red and gold and waving heat-vibration rising from the earth. Trenly looked ahead, hesitated, then impulsively followed her. Hearing her singing he lingered, following more slowly. He kept near her, his head lowered, walk-

ing silently. and so she caught him when she turned to look back for the others.

"Listening! And I thought I was alone and was doing such nonsensical things, as a canary does for experiment," she laughed.

"What a voice you have, Mrs. Conover!" was all he could say. "Strange Conover never told me, and yet he knows I'm a melomaniac of the acutest type."

"Rush does not care for music. I never sing for anyone but the children."

"Not in the world—in society?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot; Cloelia and Uncle Torm seem to like to hear me."

He turned and looked at her in amazement. Was that what the word meant to her—society?

"And you love it—music?" he asked.

"Oh, Mr. Trenly, isn't it the last supreme gift of the Creator, conscience-stricken too late after making the laws of life? Perhaps I should not have said that—but I mean it reverently."

"It expresses the tumult in us that finds no vent in action; the defiance of so many things as they are and should not be; the ambitions that are smothered in a silent soul," he said gravely.

"Oh, yes, and above all it expresses love, love, love!" she cried, her eyes like stars.

"To me music stands for all the emotions that have come to me as a woman," she went on. "I mean as a daughter, a wife, a mother. It always seems to fall under one of those three heads. I've had no other life, you see! Just one kind of love linked into another kind. Once I heard a terrible thing of Beethoven's, and I found I had not lived enough to know what it meant. It would not classify with the rest. It took hold of me and shook me from head to foot, that beautiful, terrible thing! And I knew, as I listened, that outside of the limits of my poor little happy life was a great world of unknown emotion, and I was frightened by that cry of agony, tumult, revolt."

"Perhaps it was love just the same, but refusing to come under your three captions," he ventured.

"Perhaps it was! Because there was evil in the music, discord, and oh, the suffering!" she cried. "And yet, do you know, it left me with a regret that my horizon is about the size of a saucer, as Cloelia says. You see, I have not had a big, broad sort of a life, Mr. Trenly. I was married straight out of school. Did Rush ever tell you? My wedding gown was my graduation gown, plus a veil. You see, father couldn't afford two good frocks in one year of the same sort, and Rush refused flatly to wait."

He smiled back at her, because she expected it; and he left unsaid what he had intended and bent his head as even a scoffer does while a prayer is being said within his hearing.

As they neared the house she called out:

"Well, admiral, here we are! Would it disturb you if I got my zither and sang something for Mr. Trenly before the others come? He has asked me. Please be frank; we can as well go to the library."

Admiral Sproull arose and made haste to beg her not to deprive him of sharing Mr. Trenly's pleasure. The admiral's manner was a little more elaborate than usual; his keen eyes met the younger man's with suspicion and defiance.

Then into the house sped Joan and out again, her hat gone, her old zither—Cloelia's wedding present—under her arm. Settling herself eagerly at the table covered with the admiral's Sunday papers, she rapidly tuned the instrument, and the men watched her and talked of other things. And slowly the young officer's views of Conover's character began to refocus themselves, judged by the standard of this wife of his—wasted upon his light, selfish nature.

Then, with a radiant face, she looked up—fitting the plectrum on her thumb—prepared to give her best, as she always loved to give, from a crumb to a sparrow on her window-sill to her great soul to the man whom she married.

"Please, Mrs. Conover, sing what-

ever you're in the mood to sing," said Lieutenant Trenly.

"Mrs. Conover has no moods, Trenly; she's too happy, too healthy." The admiral's tone smacked of the quarter-deck, as the younger man was quick to recognize.

She was already detached from them, and her beautiful hands stretched themselves and dragged harmony out of the short strings—hands to steer a man's life straight or wreck it altogether, thought the younger man, looking a little bored for the admiral's eyes. Jerking his glance up from the fascination of her hands, Trenly looked into her face, stirred to extreme sensibility, the lips apart, pouring out notes that vibrated her whole body. The wide divergence in that moment between what this young man wished to do and did do stands for civilization.

Puffing serenely at one of the admiral's Russian cigarettes, Gustavus Trenly knew that he was facing a possibility terrible from whatever point it was viewed—if he let himself go! It was all in that. That he had the power in him to move this woman he was absolutely sure—her vast capacity for happiness, her entire unconsciousness and ignorance, all would fight with him, not against. And on his side fate had caught him in a sentimental, heart-sore mood. And when he left the ship Rush Conover was known in all the salons of Venice, a brilliant figure in his uniform, the best dancer in the ballrooms, bending over pretty women, pretending to coax for the dances that had been kept for him in secret hopefulness. And later going back with all the others to the ship, singing along the Riva degli Schiavone to the landing. Trenly realized that Joan Conover knew no more than Patty herself of the realities of her husband's life. "A bad man would make use of that," thought he, shivering. And then he listened to her; singing as a bird does, a little drunk with sunshine and ecstasy of living, and all thought of evil vanished from his heart as he watched her, mentally suddenly on his knees before her. And then he

lighted a second cigarette before he tossed the tiny tip of the first away.

"Now, the admiral's favorite, and I'm done!" exclaimed Joan, and the old officer made a movement of pleasure at her thoughtfulness, and his heart went out to her in a strong feeling of fatherly protection, as he vowed in his heart that no evil should befall the child, if he had the power to prevent it.

She smiled into his sad old eyes, and sang blithely:

"A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast."

When the words "our heritage the sea!" ended her song Trenly arose, said abruptly that his temporary work at the Department was done, and that he was ordered to duty at the New York yard and would leave at once. Shaking hands with his two companions, he left a message for Miss Archibald and the others, and was gone.

"He makes me think of Rush," sighed Mrs. Conover, after the gate had clicked.

"Does he, indeed!" came drily from the admiral, who had lived a long, long while, and knew the meaning of many things.

IV

THERE must have been something very insidious in the charm of the old Archibald place, for September found both Mrs. Poyet and Admiral Sproull still there, rather to their own astonishment. When the days began to get cooler, toward the first of October, the library became the social center.

A log fire was started in the huge old fireplace, Miss Hester's high-backed colonial armchair was put in its place on the right, in which when she was seated she was lost to view save for a bit of her black silk gown below the knee. On the left, and opposite it, was a Maryland settle, claw-footed and becolumned, into which Uncle Tom and all the children crowded Sunday nights, quite as if it were the only piece

of furniture in the room. As a result of being an ancient family of very few marriages, the house was full of wonderful old pieces of San Domingo mahogany; rare pieces here and there of tulip-wood and palisander; curious triple-backed Chippendale settees; a panoply of rusty swords in the broad hall, the oldest of which was carried by a Royalist in Roundhead days, the newest by a Confederate colonel, no less a person than Miss Hester's father. Treasures there were in the old house—where Henry Clay had paid wordy court to a once brilliant hostess—that would have made their fortune if the thought of selling any of it had ever entered an Archibald's imagination.

The library was a small room, all fireplace and book-shelves to the ceiling, Miss Hester's exquisite old desk beside one of the windows, the card-table that spent the summer on the lawn at the other, and between them the little table on which rested a "Breeches Bible" under glass.

Only standard books, *hors concours* in the literary world, filled the book-shelves. There had been no additions since Dickens; if any fiction had since been written they had not heard of it at The Oaks. Moreover, if it amounted to literature, ten years sooner or later made no difference whatever to people who owned first editions of Fielding and D'Arblay; books written when spelling was a mere matter of personal taste; quaint old duodecimos out of print two centuries, tucked behind the statelier quartos for lack of room.

Admiral Sproull was amazed at the wonders he discovered in the old family library of generations of reading gentlefolk, and he gently taxed Miss Hester with her ignorance.

"No, sir, you are quite in error. Father brought us up with a great respect for this inheritance of his," she replied with quiet pride.

"So much so," interposed Tom Archibald, "that to be sent to the library for the afternoon was only a little less anathema than to be ordered to make ready for church."

"Brother Torm, I am astonished at

you!" cried Miss Hester, smiling a half-pleased motherly protest at the admiral, begging his leniency for frivolous youth and its forward tongue; and Archibald's deeply furrowed, weather-beaten face broke into the wayward smile of a spoiled boy, perfectly aware of the *nuances* of these scenes as his merry eyes met Cloelia's. To his two older sisters he was still a feckless lad of twenty, with that strange wisdom about mechanics and the intricacies of law that they found to be innate in the youngest male mind.

Down in the city, at the club, Sproull consorted with all the other retired admirals and generals, meeting daily, never at a loss for conversation with the tales of their old grievances, their old triumphs never quite all told.

He had to stand a lot of gibing as to the whereabouts and why of his retreat, kept such a mystery from them all.

And for answer he laughed and boasted: "I'm living under the same roof with the prettiest woman on earth today!"

"Trust Phil Sproull for that!" cried a gay old gentleman incorrigibly sprightly at three-and-seventy, the delicate audacities of whose conversation made him still a favorite among the fair sex.

Up at The Oaks Joan and Cloelia were absorbed in the rehabilitation of the former's wardrobe, for would not Rush be coming in the spring?

It had come about in this wise: One day said Joan, chattering under the strong excitement of her husband's letter just read:

"Cloelia—now you will not laugh?"

"I shall be the undertaker of your merriest thought, my dear!" vowed the other.

"Well, then, Cloelia—Rush, you know, does not like to see me poorly dressed——"

"I didn't—but I do!" cried Mrs. Poyet, quite like her old fantastic self these days.

"So while he's gone on a cruise I barely spend enough for pins—on my

clothes, I mean. I know you've been ashamed of me this summer, such rags and tatters!"

"How well you read my every thought—I haven't a friend whose appearance gives me less pleasure—idiot!" exclaimed Cloelia.

"Oh, I suppose I'm the same old me in everything—but my poor darned, turned, cleaned, dyed dresses! I have to remember not to raise my right arm in my Sunday organdie—such a darn! and in the old blue dimity I must always sit long and often on my left gores—Serafina is a dear, but she does scorch things! And a scorch Aunt Hester says is like a lie—it won't wash out, nor blue out, nor boil out. Well, so during Rush's cruises I manage to save a little every month—I start right in the moment he's gone—and then get a lot of pretty, fresh things forinst my lord's return! This cruise I have done perfect wonders. You wouldn't believe! Why, honey, I have almost sixty-five dollars to spend right now on my porcine self!"

Mrs. Poyet was careful to show all the surprise expected of her, her eyes bent lovingly upon her busy companion. Joan cut out a little garment, basted it, flew to the machine, sewed with a merry rush of the pedals, then back to the dining-room table, speechlessly absorbed in corner-turning for a few moments; and while they talked Patty was richer by a little apron.

"So next week I'm going to begin on my trousseau," laughed Joan, sitting back, her hands clasped behind her head. Cloelia got a pad and pencil, and leaned across the mirror-like old mahogany table, where great men had dined in the old days, and Hester Archibald, when a slip of a girl, was sent for and passed around with the port until her cheeks almost rivaled it in color.

"Now, Joan; first, what have you? second, what would you like? third, what must you get? and finally, what can you get?" And at it tooth and nail they both went, oblivious of a larger world.

Far back in the widow's head several plans were taking form, to be carried out in secret.

"I know a dream of a little Swiss dressmaker, just making her way; it would be pure charity to let me give her some of your work. Cheap? Yes, a perfect wonder. Leave one or two things to me, please; I'll watch every cent. I'll take them with me when I go, and when you make me that promised visit this winter you can try them on. Not coming? Nonsense; of course you are coming! You will hurt me cruelly, Joan, if you disappoint me about it."

"Well, we'll see," said Mrs. Conover, hating to see any cloud return to her friend's face.

Before the demands of luncheon ended the feminine conference, Joan's heart was beating with the excitements of imaginary plumage, soon to be realized. To her it was a delicious dissipation, an almost fearful fascination, to which she alternately yielded with a thrill or drew back from with a chill of expedient doubt. To Cloelia it meant several things which she kept to herself, only her voice was very tender as she linked her arm within her friend's as they walked back to the dining-room when summoned, and she whispered in Joan's ear:

"In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove!"

The afternoon before Mrs. Poyet left The Oaks to return to her apartment in New York for the fast-approaching winter, she was sitting alone in Miss Hester's chair by the library fire, resting after a long morning's packing. Joan and the children were driving with Uncle Tom in Sister Clarice's carriage; the admiral had gone to the club with his usual promptness after luncheon and his one cigar. Miss Hester had been sent for by her sister to listen to a recent marked acceleration and arrhythmia of her pulse which left her completely exhausted, and which without doubt would soon put a full stop to an over-

wrought existence. Miss Hester's expression as she clicked the reins on Spark's back was singularly free from both haste and alarm, and it is to be feared Sister Clarice received a larger piece of Sister Hester's mind that afternoon than of her sympathy, with Brother Tom, the family buffer, not by to stand between.

So when Lieutenant Trenly was shown into the library Mrs. Poyet had him quite to herself. Even while she was making the usual conventional remarks conveying both surprise and pleasure at his unexpected appearance, she was aware of a curious little excitement as she arose and held out her hand.

He gave her a different impression somehow, dressed in his afternoon calling clothes; the straw hat and blue flannels had taken from his age and dignity. He seemed very much a man of the world holding the power of his comely manhood, his knowledge of life, his obvious personal monetary prosperity, in a strong grasp to be used to whatever end best beseeemed him.

"And they have all gone driving! Patty's heart will be broken; you are already in her prayers, Mr. Trenly; somewhere between Yunosuke and Waffles—I forget the exact sequence! Oh, why didn't you tell us you were coming!" exclaimed she.

"I came unexpectedly about a court-martial matter. I go back tomorrow, but I thought I'd run up and see how you all were, and bring that promised cow to Patty. I've got it somewhere—ah, here it is! You see, it does moo, as I told her," laughed he.

Then there was a little awkward pause, which Cloelia relieved by adding to her dole:

"And the admiral has gone, too, on that important duty at his club; where he finds in his letter-box three advertisements, two bills and an invitation to a reunion Farragut dinner in San Francisco! I made him confess one day that his sense of haste as regards his daily mail was very seldom justified. A retired military man, in full possession of his faculties, is pa-

thetically comic, or comically pathetic, as you choose. May it never befall you, Mr. Trenly!"

"Does that wish shorten my days or hasten my mental decay? You leave me in doubt," he answered merrily, feeling his disappointment at Mrs. Conover's absence so keenly, that above all things it must remain hidden.

"So you are at the New York yard—why!" murmured Cloelia, following a sudden thought that scampered by.

"Yes, thank goodness! I was afraid I should be dropped down into one of our small American towns where the repainting of the First Presbyterian Church represents art, where the local self-made potentate represents politics and his self-made wife society. And the entire town goes to bed at half-past nine! I wonder if you will understand me—or not misunderstand me, rather—when I ask you to conceive the miseries of a naval officer—a fellow who has no ties, like myself—immediately after three years of Europe and being in touch with rather big things, diplomatic, social, artistic, and so forth, to be sent to bed at half-past nine, just because there isn't one blessed thing to do after that! It happened to me once, and I'm glad to be in a big town this time. Any fool butterfly can come out of his cocoon, but the cleverest can't get back into it after trying his wings a bit."

"I'm going to take my old apartment this winter, I think I told you. I will send you my card. I'll have a day in December and January, and should be delighted to see you."

"Oh, thanks very much," came perfunctorily from the man of many invitations.

"You might help me in all sorts of ways, when Mrs. Conover comes, for I do want her to have one supremely, gloriously happy time before matrimony again swallows her up."

He sat listening intently, feeling himself pale at her words, which reopened a door he had been at considerable pains to close and bar securely within the past few months, bar even against his vagrant thoughts. Where was the

admiral to stop that mischievous tongue, which rattled on and made reply unnecessary?

"I want my Joan to have one big gulp of happiness before the old chains are clamped down upon her. Oh, I know he's a friend of yours. That suppresses my opinion of Rush Conover, but it does not alter it. The unevenness of fate in a naval marriage! Unless somebody has some outside source of income and the wife can follow him, or when he is at home he is generous enough in his nature—if not his pocket—to make up to her for a little at least of the sacrifice of youth and opportunity, the long, patient, faithful waiting, the unshared responsibility of parentage, the petty economies that break one's heart to listen to!"

He leaned forward in his chair and remarked quietly, eyes on the fire:

"Of course, between us I fancy we can give Mrs. Conover a pretty good time. It helps a little to have a man about that you feel free to call upon to get tickets, and take you to places—sort of tame cat, you know."

"With no *arrières pensées* to bother about," suggested Cloelia comfortably.

"Exactly!" he assented, with gravity.

"Joan has never heard an opera, Mr. Trenly!" cried she tragically.

"Then may Conover's blood be on his own head!" laughed he, his own mounting to his dark face and surging at his temples. Seizing upon her still formless project, he shaped and developed and expanded it, and not until he plumply demanded a fixed date did she stop him with a breathless little laugh of protest.

"It's my pleasure to organize, and look ahead, and get things down in black and white," he explained coolly. "Can't help it to save my life—from Jacky's landing parties to a fair lady's whims."

His brilliant dark eyes looked very frankly into hers as he spoke, carrying the conviction of entire honesty of purpose, because that conviction was also in his heart. The daily "deliver us from evil" contains the germ of just

such situations. The reproachful eyes of the admiral, that had returned to Mrs. Poyet's mental vision for a moment, faded away again.

"A note will always find me at the Bachelors' Club at the yard," he said, rising and taking his leave.

He had been gone some minutes and Mrs. Poyet was still sitting smiling into the fire, when he suddenly reappeared at the door, and she looked at him in amazement.

"I came back to say this—I got out of the trolley and walked back—Mrs. Poyet, is it, after all, wise to disturb peace when one finds it in this world? Isn't it a little like the boy and his stones and the pond asleep with no ripple on its surface? Is it the best thing for—Mrs. Conover, all round, I mean?"

"Good heavens, you must have met Admiral Sproull!" cried Cloelia unthinkingly, and then found it very awkward to explain to him her meaning.

"Then you think it will be for her best?" He begged for acquiescence.

"Would I touch it if I did not think so?" laughed Mrs. Poyet, and they parted.

It comforted him somewhat in after years to remember that he had gone back that day and begged the widow to reconsider her plan to deliver Joan for a little from the suttee of a widowhood as cruel in her eyes as the law of widowhood in India.

After dinner that night, while Joan was putting the children to sleep and the admiral was smoking in the library, Mrs. Poyet wandered into the stately drawing-room with its quaint inlaid marqueterie furniture, and lighting the old gilt wall candelabra above the piano, she sat idly, playing softly to herself. Presently, hearing someone close the door behind her and thinking it was Joan, she asked:

"Is that you, dear?"

"Well, it's what I'd like to be—dear," rumbled out the unmistakable voice of Thomas Archibald, a trifle more husky than usual. She laughed and played on.

"If you'll stop playing I'll ask you to marry me," came next from the shadows behind her. She continued playing.

"Is that your answer?"

No other was vouchsafed.

"Do you realize, madam, that there is a human being madly in love with you, standing with difficulty at a certain distance behind you, heartbroken at your going away tomorrow, and begging for about an ounce of hope?"

The chords became distinctly interrogative.

"A pennyweight, then, parsimonious but charming creature?" If that wasn't a soft affirmative, then he had lost his hearing!

"You will?" he cried, going nearer. "You really might do worse, Mrs. Poyet. If not young in years, his heart is still teething; if not handsome, he is quite distinguished-looking, if he'd only remember to stand straight; his pocket is sometimes full and sometimes empty, according to the crops; but ask when it's full and it shall be given thee; anyhow, the blood in his veins is fairly clogged with bluing! He's nothing but a jester, but each bell on his cap and sorry sceptre tinkles, 'I love you, I love you!'"

The pale hair looked golden under the candlelight, and the head drooped a little sideways coquettishly.

"Some day, then, you'll marry me? When everything else fails, of course. At the cannon's mouth, as it were? With your third to the last breath you will say, 'Thomas, I will!' And then I'll have two breaths of heaven—and that's several more than I ever expected! All right—shake!"

Out went his hand, and laughing she turned and put hers into it, and then arose from the piano stool.

"Now, remember, we're as good as engaged!" he insisted.

"Why, of course," she said, still laughing and closing the piano.

As he raised his head to blow out the candles in the sconce, she was startled to see how white and sad his face was, and for one fleeting second she wondered if she and the rest of the

world always understood Tom Archibald. Then with a merry interchange of burlesque love-making they left the room together, and joined the others in the library, and even Miss Hester laughed till she cried when Brother Tom announced the mock engagement.

In the end Cloelia Poyet had her way and carried all barriers, smoothed away all difficulties, and the admiral saw Mrs. Conover off the day she left for her long talked of visit to New York. The memory of her flushed, happy face smiling at him out of the car window, as she leaned out and sent a score of messages back to Aunt Hester, and Uncle Tom, and Serafina, and the children themselves, did much toward allaying his strong antagonism to the whole undertaking.

Cloelia had written that Joan should be met by someone in Jersey City, and what more natural than that Lieutenant Trenly should be that one, relieving Mrs. Poyet of that always onerous task?

Joan's joyous greeting of him quite repaid him for a strenuous morning at the yard which had won for him an afternoon of freedom.

They glanced obliquely at each other, noting the effect of a season's change in costume. To her he seemed a very notable-looking man, the best dressed she had ever known—not handsome like Rush, of course, but—well, there certainly was an indescribable air about this friend of her husband's.

In his eyes as they walked toward the ferry she seemed to him the bonniest woman in the world, in her simple dark blue suit and hat, and the black lynx boa and muff Cloelia had sent her for Christmas. At that moment nothing but the knightliest wish to help two women, who trusted him, to a little honest happiness in life possessed his soul.

From the moment she passed him her check for her one small trunk all her traveling cares ceased, he saw to everything quietly, serenely—she could not help thinking of Rush's

bluster—and she moved along from station to ferry, from ferry to a cab, but there she stopped.

"Oh, I never take a cab, please, Mr. Trenly! I send my trunk and go by trolley when I travel. It's little things that count so in traveling, and I'm being wickedly extravagant anyhow by coming at all."

"Since you were here the tariff has changed, and it's cheaper now to take a cab than use the express, and I know Mrs. Poyet wants your trunk to arrive when you do; she's got something on for the afternoon," he solemnly asserted, having had his instructions from Cloelia that Joan's pride and purse must somehow be spared, at whatever cost to their own paltry principles.

"Oh, is it!" Joan said, and he helped her in, his eyes twinkling as she handed him her slim little purse. It seemed but a moment later when they dashed up to the great apartment house, and soon the two women were in each other's arms. After the first excited voluble whirl of greeting between the two Cloelia cried:

"Now, Joan, we haven't one single second to spare. There's a loan exhibition of paintings at the Union League Club, and of course we are going—what woman ever declined to go to a bachelor's dinner or a man's club when she gets a chance? We'll have tea there. It'll be perfectly jammed, but I want everybody to meet you or see you anyhow, as soon as possible, in the stingy little fortnight you've given me! Look straight at me, Joan. I think you'll do as you are. Don't you think Mrs. Conover will do as she is, Mr. Trenly? What sort of a blouse have you got on? No, that will not do, for it will be sweltering and our wraps must come off. Please ring that bell, Mr. Trenly, and when Janet comes send her to me at once in Mrs. Conover's room. Come along, Joan. We'll not be fifteen minutes; truly, Mr. Trenly, not a second more. Sure you don't mind waiting? Smoke—do anything you like; I prefer friends to furniture any day."

So a breathless, laughing Joan was taken possession of and rushed into one of the two dresses Mrs. Poyet had undertaken to have made for her—a light gray Japanese crêpe Rush had brought her home years ago from a former cruise. A billowy mass of chiffon and lace it was now, thrown over her head by nimble-witted Janet before poor bewildered Joan had time for more than a gasp of astonishment.

"Didn't I tell you she was a treasure, that Swiss dressmaker? It looks nice enough to eat with a spoon. And just wait till you see her ridiculous bill—it ought to be framed! Oh, and Joan, I found one of my last year's hats that matched exactly, and Janet dodged it up for us, so please just slam it on and come. We haven't time to talk and argue; we'll do that afterward."

The maid was transfixed by one quelling glance from her mistress's pale eyes, and held her peace, glorying in the picture now standing before the pier glass. In the soft silver gray from head to foot stood Joan, the large hat framing the lovely face, now ablaze with excitement, the gray ostrich tips tumbling over one another to peep down at her over the rolling brim.

"Now grab your furs—no matter what other clothes you've got on this winter; Joan, don't forget your muff. If we don't hurry Lieutenant Trenly will be ordered to sea. Come!"

Throwing a long cloak over her dazed friend's shoulders and seizing one herself, Cloelia fled to the elevator and rang furiously, sending Janet to the drawing-room for their escort.

In a gale of laughter they crowded into one of the cabs loitering at the entrance and dashed up the Avenue. All forms were clearly outlined in the brilliant, cold sunlight, all colors stood out sharply; only the sounds were muffled by asphalt and rubber. Everything movable seemed bent upon a tremendous speed. Lines of carriages sped up and down full of gaily dressed women with joking lips and weary eyes. In the midst of the "chaos of so-called civilization," Joan's eyes grew wistful and she cried:

"Oh, Cloelia, I'm frightened and my babies seem very far away! I've never been part of it before; I've always been on the sidewalk watching." Mrs. Poyet and Lieutenant Trenly laughed excitedly; their dream was coming true.

At the well-known corner they stopped and joined the chattering, laughing throng within, slowly moving up and down the stairs in two opposite currents. In the great room above, where tea was served, grave portraits frowned darkly down upon a gay picture of "confections and persiflage."

"Now, find us a table, Mr. Trenly, and we'll let poor Mrs. Conover rest and catch her breath before we do anything else. Even a Barbizon will look better after tea and cake."

So they settled themselves and threw off their wraps, Cloelia's very tall, slight figure all in black giving—as she meant it should—the exact note necessary in the picture to bring out her friend's fair beauty in the gray. Whenever Joan's sweet glance wandered about the room she found eyes staring into hers, and the two conspirators exchanged delighted looks.

Before long several men stood conspicuously in the line of Trenly's gaze, much to his amusement, and for some time he ignored them; presently he asked offhand, after Joan had had her refreshment in comfort:

"By the bye, do you ladies care to meet a lot of men I know here? They are hovering in the distance, hungry as wolves to know the two most stunning women here today."

"Do we care to meet a lot of men!" scorned Mrs. Poyet. "Are we alive? Are we sane? Bring them up at once, sir; what do you mean!"

And the wolves came like smiling lambs. There were two French naval officers Trenly had met in the West Indies; there was an English baronet, a globe-trotter he had first met at a Government House dinner in Hong Kong and had been running across ever since all over the world; there was a handsome surgeon from the navy

yard and an old member of the club whose guests they were.

In a crowded room it takes some time before even pre-eminent beauty begins to tell. It permeates a throng slowly, in whispers that travel from one ear to another. In the social world, where all women somehow succeed in giving at least the impression of beauty and where one's dreary eyes have searched in vain for hours for the real jewel, one is slow to believe when a friend murmurs: "They say there's a beauty here today—the real thing! Who is she? And where?"

But within an hour there were few women and no men who had not searched for and found Joan. If she had been singing to them there would have been no more faces turned toward her, wherever her eyes wandered.

One of the French officers had concentrated his somewhat worn charms upon Joan from the moment he was presented, and leaned close to her, speaking so low the rest could not hear. Presently Trenly saw her start and blush and turn toward the others, saying hurriedly:

"When do we see the pictures?"

They seemed to consider this a witty speech and laughed, but Trenly lifted her wrap from the back of a chair and said quietly:

"Come, I'll take you to the gallery."

As they moved away, she said:

"I think that man talking to me must have misunderstood your introduction. He did not know I was married, and said such odd things to me. I was so glad to come away; and now, do tell me why they all laughed. Perhaps there are no pictures. What is it?"

"The object of a social gathering is generally the most inconspicuous element connected with it, you'll find."

At the door of the gallery the two old club members who amused themselves dealing out the programs had a little laughing fight as to who should claim the honor of handing one to the beauty as she passed. She smiled, took one from each and thanking them passed on. No great belle of the

realm could have done better in the little scene, and Trenly made mental note of it to add to Mrs. Poyet's triumph. The crowd was beginning to leave the little gallery and pass on to the library, so they could see a picture now and then.

Slowly they made their way about the two small rooms, moving with the throng which talked loud and learnedly the patois of art.

"Fenner's always the same—that green skin of his!" cried a gray-haired, disheveled dame, who was clawing feverishly for her pendent lorgnette. Her companion spoke trenchantly.

"Henner, I mean, of course. What did I say? Quite the same, quite the same. And then here's dear old Troyon and his cows. I always look round for a fence, they are so real!" she giggled girlishly.

Her friend, who hated her, spoke again.

"Van Marcke? Is it? Well, what's the difference? They couldn't tell themselves apart," which was very hard on both of them. Joan did not say very much as the two strolled about, till they came to a final corner where, well on the line, was a picture before which she stood in silence. A perspective of many miles of translucent landscape, brought out in some marvelous way by delicate shadings, ever of the same brilliant silver tone; a burnished sheet of water sleeping in the middle distance, and like a delicate black lace veil covering a beautiful face, over the foreground was dropped the faint fine tracery of dark gray trees. A shepherd lad, half-clad in skins, leaned against a tree trunk absorbed in his flute, on his head a tiny scarlet cap, the only bit of vivid color in the painting.

"You may have all the others, Mr. Trenly—but leave me this!" cried Mrs. Conover. "It seems to me it's a picture of my own life, so quiet, so dull in tone, but so full of peace. And there I am playing my own little flute all to myself, happy as the day is long."

"Madonna della Sedia, I tell you! I guess I know what I'm talking about!"

suddenly was hissed in a sharp whisper close behind them, and Joan asked what the woman meant. Trenly smiled into her wondering face, and said:

"Don't you really know, Mrs. Conover? She meant you, of course. I thought of it the moment I saw you with Patty in your arms. I ran up to Dresden from Trieste not long ago."

"I've only seen photographs and engravings of all the great paintings; I wish I could see the colors. I suppose I never shall," she sighed.

"I know where there are several good copies. I'll take you some day, if we can ever get out of Mrs. Poyet's clutches," he replied, realizing how difficult a thing it was to reach this woman's vanity.

She turned and they went on to the stately library, where they found Mrs. Poyet surrounded by her little court. Three women friends had joined her, and as soon as Joan met them they invited the beauty at once, one to a *poudré* dinner, one to a cotillion, the third to a box and supper party.

"I shall have to place myself in Mrs. Poyet's hands," smiled Joan, standing all smiles, pleased as a young girl with a fast filling dance-card, and Cloelia gloried in her. Have her they must, these hospitable women, if only as a bait for difficult men; and Mrs. Poyet's hands were full as they strolled back through the fast emptying rooms. Trenly caught Joan looking back at the Corot, and she smiled a little tremulously, murmuring:

"Ah, my silvery peace! Shall I ever find my way back to it?"

V

It was as well that Mrs. Conover was possessed of perfect health and nerves like steel. Her endurance was severely tested during the first nine days of her visit, for it was given up to one continuous whirl of what the restless world calls pleasure. Dinners and dances, luncheons, suppers, theatre parties filled to overlapping the hurrying

days and nights. To find time for her daily letter to The Oaks was no small task for Mrs. Conover.

The musical program for Joan's amusement had weeks ago been turned over to Lieutenant Trenly, from the hiring of a harp zither for a month to the tickets for the Ring of the Nibelungen, which was to be given at the opera house the second week of her stay, and before which lesser things were ordered to retire. Cloelia had taken her one night to hear "Aida," and it meant so much to Joan, such strangely intimate things, that she could not speak of it beyond a cold, meagre thanks to her disappointed friend. She might as well have put into words what the first kiss of her first-born had meant to her years ago! But Trenly understood the great reserve of all passionate natures, whose very vulnerability to emotion demands that shield. The very anticipation of hearing the Ring gave Joan shivers of half delight, half pain, for she knew that it was to be the apotheosis of her inner life.

Mrs. Conover's real debut was made, however, the second night after her arrival in New York, at a dinner given by Mrs. Poyet, followed by a little reception and "some music."

Joan had been what Cloelia called "very nice" about the gray dress, believing implicitly all that was told her; but when—not without qualms—Mrs. Poyet brought in the white evening toilet and told another barefaced tale about the occult powers of her Swiss modiste, even Joan laughed.

"Cloelia, where do you expect to go when you die?"

"Try it on, just for fun, Joan. You'll never take it off again as long as you live!"

"Then I'd better not put it on till evening anyhow. Ah, Cloelia, you are hopeless. Do you suppose that that ten yards of white *crêpe de Japon* that I handed you made itself into this thing that looks like a spider's web full of morning dewdrops! How on earth shall I ever pay for it? It will take years and years," sighed Mrs. Conover.

"Well, I did take the liberty of adding a few old scraps of lace of my own, Joan, if you must know the truth. And for heaven's sake, if it makes you feel any better, when you get through with the dress you can rip them off and pay every cent for the cleaning and return them to me by express prepaid—for goodness' sake don't forget to prepay the express! I never saw such a fuss about every little thing I choose to do for you, and you know perfectly well, Joan Conover, how alone I am in the world—no daughters, no sisters and such things to fuss over! I only know men, men, men—and whoever had any fun playing with a boy doll? You take every bit of my pleasure away with your everlasting haggling about money—instead of being large-minded and generous about it—it takes as much generosity to receive as to give. I did think I had at least one friend in the world!" stormed Cloelia, taking out her handkerchief and dabbing at her eyes, her voice at least full of tears.

And after that Joan, in a burst of self-abasement, promised anything and everything in the way of cheerful compliance.

"I'll be your wax doll, and you shall dress and undress me all day long, dear. Come, Cloelia, come—we'll try it on now, for I'm honestly dying to."

"Well, I haven't much heart left for it now, but I suppose we had better see if it's right about the shoulders," grudging Cloelia, sniffing a little and keeping up her pose awhile longer, to cover some jeweled ornaments on the bodice of the dress, which had not yet quite dawned upon her friend.

Never a word said Joan while yielding herself to the solemn rite of robing, save for sundry ejaculations of feminine ecstasy as the effect of the whole began to develop itself. But when it was accomplished and Cloelia pushed her in front of the mirror, the storm broke.

"Never, never, never! Not even for you will I wear a dress cut like that about the shoulders! Something's got

to be done to it at once—I'll make a lace yoke or—something——"

"Oh, yes, do! Make a guimpe of pink crinkled paper and pin it on, as I saw in a farmhouse once! It was a low-necked lithograph of a pretty actress, and the farmer's wife was too economical, and also too hungry for pictures, to throw it away altogether, but of course no decent woman could have that on the wall; but with the pink paper pleated yoke it was all right and didn't interfere with evening prayers!" Cloelia's tone was withering and her nose well in the air, and light-hearted Joan laughed till the tears came.

"So perfectly silly the way you go on, Joan, as if you had the only really sacred shoulder-blades in the world! And for the matter of that, I call that a high-necked dress! Wait till you see what I'm going to wear; and as for the other four women coming tonight—well, you'll feel like a tract on feminine modesty before the evening's over!"

Yokeless, Joan was sitting in the drawing-room that evening waiting for the guests when Lieutenant Trenly arrived. As she arose and held out her hand to him he drew in his breath and knew at once that he was in deep water and fast losing his footing. He had had himself well in hand up to that moment, firmly determined to remain true to the triangular trust imposed in him by Lieutenant Conover, his brother officer; by Mrs. Poyet, his hostess; by Joan's absolute confidence in him. Mentally he saw clearly all around the situation, which did not in the least prevent waves of emotion from tossing him about as if he were a bit of driftwood.

He could not speak for a moment lest he should say too much; finally came a meagre:

"You're looking pretty fit tonight, Mrs. Conover."

"It's the dress. Isn't it a dream of bliss, unalloyed? I ought to look nice, because I feel so nice!" she cried, moving about, looking back at her train like the veriest schoolgirl.

"The fact is you're too beautiful to have any vanity," he exclaimed, "for is not vanity the crutch rather of our weaknesses than of our excellencies?"

"Yes, I see exactly what you mean; and that's what Rochefoucauld means when he says: 'Speak to a pretty woman of books, to a witty woman of her looks,'" she replied, as serenely as if they were discussing Mary of Scotland.

"Well, if it's in the script of that old expert sinner, there's nothing further to be said," returned he; "we'll talk henceforth of books, you and I!"

Before anyone else arrived to note it he looked with the keen pleasure of an artistic nature at her fair head, the outline of which was not lost in the simple arrangement of the hair; the glistering marble of her throat, shoulders and round forearms coming like long pistils out of the broad corolla of her sleeves; and above all the splendid repose of her whole person as she sat before him. No, he had not set himself an easy task! And yet Rush Conover could look at other women and have his little seaport flirtations hither and yon! This was a woman to satisfy every fibre in a fine man's soul, and spoil his senses forever for a lesser perfection. Ah, what might his own life have been if he had met and won her first! With his private means outside of his pay he could have framed her life as it deserved to be, given her the food her soul longed for, very far removed from Mrs. Poyet's rather bohemian entourage. It would have been one of the world's few flawless passions, for he was so sure he could have won from her such a love as Rush would never know as long as he lived!

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Trenly? You are scowling at me as if you didn't quite approve of me," said Joan, with a laugh.

"I was thinking—shall I tell you? I was wishing—you had a twin sister," he ended tritely enough. He could not make one of his usual speeches for which he was famous, with those clear eyes looking fully at him and disinterested, as it were, his every thought. And then Cloelia swept in only a

moment before her guests began to arrive.

To Joan it was all dreamland, the table brilliant with candles and yellow orchids and ferns in the centre, the silver and glass reflecting the golden light shed through the yellow jeweled candle-shades; the pretty women in their soft-toned gowns that served but to enhance the hard brilliancy of their jewels; the men here and there, like dark leaves entwined in the table's pretty wreath of humanity. Joan felt as if she had never known this Cloelia, in so strange, hard, brilliant a mood was she, saying strange things, too, leaning forward holding the whole table, and laughing with the others when the laugh came. But Joan had her hour later, as Mrs. Poyet meant that she should, when after dinner a score of others wandered in to meet the beautiful Mrs. Conover.

At exactly the right moment Mrs. Poyet hinted to one of the men that her friend sang; then, of course, he went at once to her and demanded what was due the world from such a talent.

"I would with pleasure," laughed Joan, "but I left my drum at home, as the little boy said." Even as she spoke Lieutenant Trenly appeared with the beautiful inlaid zither and Janet followed with a low table.

"Mrs. Poyet found a 'drum' that perhaps will do," she said.

"They're always finding things, these two friends of mine!" murmured Joan, already fingering the unaccustomed strings, coaxing them into harmony; and then she looked up and said as unconsciously as she would to the children and Uncle Tom:

"What would you like?"

"Whole bill of fare, please, from caviar to green chartreuse!" cried the man who was obviously the social harlequin of his clique, and all worn out by that most relentless of roles.

Mrs. Poyet appealed to the room:

"And I've just fed that man! Would you suppose it?"

"Well, all I said was *bis*! What more does any successful artist want?"

then he patted himself approvingly on the head, and warmly shook his own hand and they all laughed from habit.

Then Joan's clear voice rang out, beginning to grasp this queer little game with words:

"For caviar to my public I think I'll sing the *Benedicite*!"

"She *is* human!" whispered the heartbroken comedian. "I've been so shy and nervous all the evening, not being used to an angel's society. This came as such a relief!"

And then Joan sang to them, and the first song told their trained ears that she never had been taught the secrets of singing, and the second song told them she had a secret of her own; and the laughter and the nonsense ceased and the smiles fell off their faces like masks, and they avoided each other's eyes; for she sang at their souls, and that is a thrust below the belt and disconcerting in the gay world.

"And now a lullaby!" demanded their hostess unthinkingly; and then, of course, the funny man started for the door, dragging a friend by the arm.

"'Good night,' said the polite dog, 'I really *must* be going,' etcetera, etcetera," quoted the court fool.

But Mrs. Conover gave them a lullaby full of pretty sarcenet chidings to a wakeful child, and when it was over one of the men who had silently hung about her all the evening leaned above her and said in a low tone:

"Could anything alive go to sleep while you scolded like that?"

It was not so much the words as the man's eyes that offended her, and the blood flew to her face. Holding up her head she said coldly:

"I am glad you liked it. It is the favorite lullaby of my three children," and she declined to sing again, moving from her place and joining the gayer group about Mrs. Poyet.

There was other instrumental music, then followed the daintiest of suppers, during which two Neapolitans sang their native songs, accented volcanically; and after a little champagne the men began to join in, and presently formed a circle about Joan, clinking

glasses with her as they passed before her. After a little helpless embarrassment she joined merrily in with the spirit of their fun and sang with them. The widow and the lieutenant stood apart and beamed at each other. It was all going so well—Joan was quaffing eagerly the glass of pleasure they had prepared for her. The picture she made standing there remained in the memory of one in that room as long as he lived.

The days and the nights sped by, and Mrs. Conover and Mr. Trenly had one intense feeling, unshared: "I have never lived before!" He thought it with jaws set to carry through his task like a gentleman, willing to pay later the accruing penalty, whatsoever it might be. She thought:

"I've looked over the edge of my little saucer at last. Can I ever be satisfied with my old six-inch diameter again? That's what the admiral meant when he said: 'Don't go!' and yes, that's what Cloelia meant when she said: 'Come!' I begin to understand them both now."

Fate, however, had a card or two up her loose sleeve, and she played them with effect during the second week of Joan's visit. Every two days the mother had had a letter from Aunt Hester telling her that the children were well, with gratifying monotony. Then came news that her old guest, Professor Pfarre, had written asking if his room was vacant at The Oaks, to which, she wrote, she had replied, "quite unceremoniously in the negative, Mrs. Poyet having retained her room." Then Tom Archibald wrote that Sister Clarice had very suddenly made up her mind to try the Nauheim baths, and he had just returned from seeing her and her nurse off in the steamer sailing from Baltimore to Boston, for so she had whimsically decided to go, having small confidence in any but a certain transatlantic line, and dreading the changes by land. Thus left an idle bachelor farmer in the midst of winter, Archibald threatened to come on and see his lady-love,

reminding Cloelia of their plighted troth.

"Dear old Uncle Torm!" cried the widow, slipping the letter into her pocket, greatly to Joan's astonishment, who caught her re-reading it that night when, after an evening at the theatre, they met in the hostess's pretty boudoir and brushed and braided their hair together, as sirens have done since Ulysses sowed his wild oats long ago.

The accident happened the very next morning. Joan stayed at home steeping herself in Nibelungen lore, for the Ring began that night, to which it had been arranged from the first that Mr. Trenly was to take them, dining with them two of the nights and they with him at some café the other two. But Mrs. Poyet, to whom it was a very old story, started off alone after breakfast on a shopping expedition, her head full of presents that Joan was to take to the children. She took a cab, objecting strongly to what she called "the step-lively familiarities" of American officials in more public conveyances. She had looked about for an automobile cab, but seeing none and spying a likely nag, she hailed a hansom and was soon flying down the Avenue, the glass down because the wind was biting cold and "the wrong things get rosy in my pale face," as she was wont to put it.

The sudden stoppage of the long lines of carriages passing up and down, followed by the furious clanging of an ambulance coming from behind left the young horse attached to Mrs. Poyet's cab frantic with fear. With a snort the pony started back and reared. Shouts came from behind up the line of cabbies whose raised whips did little to save the situation. The colt plunged and then bolted down the Avenue between two close-drawn lines of carriages. Cloelia sat erect and very still facing twenty deaths a minute, as they rushed madly down the middle of the street, the police shouting warnings ahead. With a slow, rigid movement she pushed up the glass and opened the doors, hear-

ing which the driver called through the opening above her head:

"Keep yer seat, miss; no good jumpin' out."

On the cab went, zigzagging like a drunken thing, faster and faster. Men ran out and snatched at the bridle of the terrified horse, missed it, and so served only further to madden the animal. All faces were turned watching the white-faced, rigid woman who sat as if frozen inside the swaying vehicle. Women prayed aloud in whispers, children broke into sobs, men cried out to her again and again as she flew by: "Don't jump! for God's sake, don't jump!"

Far down the street her reeling consciousness made out a line of police barring their path determinedly. The horse's eyes were young, and he saw it, too, and swerved violently to the left. There was a crash, a splintering, grinding sound, one short, terrible scream, and then silence.

When Mrs. Poyet opened her eyes, two hours afterward, she was in her own bed, a doctor was counting her pulse, watch in hand; a trained nurse knelt by her pillow; and Joan's pale face was at the foot of the bed, a look of agony in her great eyes. Cloelia tried to smile, but suddenly closed her eyes again as a great wave of pain and faintness swept her once more out upon the boundless sea of unconsciousness. When she returned she was in full possession of her faculties and cried out:

"Now, understand, all of you, I will not have any notes written or telegrams or telephones sent breaking engagements. I'm all right, only a little sore in my muscles and a little excited. Such a to-do about nothing! Anybody would be a little excited, wouldn't she, doctor? I will not have any nonsense, do you hear? You are to have your music just the same, Joan. Perhaps I can't go to-night, but 'Die Walküre' will find me in my seat. I'm right about that, am I not, doctor?"

But there was something in his kind old eyes that made her silent for a

moment; then she asked the nurse and Joan to leave her with her physician. Turning to him when they were alone she said in her peremptory way:

"Sit down there where I can see if you are telling me fibs or not. Doctor, is it more than nerves?"

"Yes, Mrs. Poyet."

"Am I seriously hurt?"

Then very gently he told her the truth with such infinite tenderness in his voice that she knew him well enough to realize that he had withheld some of it. He explained why she was not aware of her condition at once, and what had happened in those two hours of blankness, ending with:

"Even you can't go through a thing like that and come out of it smiling like a rubber doll! You're lucky, let me tell you, young lady."

After a moment, during which she stared with dilated eyes and a face like wax, he leaned over and touched her hand with a kindness that reversed the meaning of his last words. Struggling up upon her pillows, she was stopped by a sharp pain, and fell back helpless, conquered. Tears began to run down her face, and when she tried to wipe them away with her right hand, she found she had to use her left.

Presently she said brokenly:

"And I had planned a little trip to fairyland for my friend in there! I was so sure above all things of myself! My whole heart has been in it. It was just her one little chance in all of her life for pleasure—her one little chance! Doctor, listen. This you can and must do for me, and then I'll do everything you wish. Listen: promise me you'll tell her nothing of my hurt—she must not know or it will all end. I know her; she would not leave my bedside. Doctor, she does not already know?" cried Cloelia in a sudden panic.

"No one knows but the nurse and me, Mrs. Poyet. Try to be calm; it shall all be as you wish, trust me. We'll call it nerves and a slight sprain; how will that suit you?"

Then only did her face relax into something like a smile.

When Treniy sat down alone with Joan to dinner that night in Cloelia's apartment, he wished he had kept up his old early prayer: "From the crafts and assaults of the devil, spare us, good Lord!" Janet had handed him a note from Mrs. Poyet, and after reading it alone in the hall upon his arrival his face grew pale and his teeth went together in grim determination. He knew beyond all questioning that the supreme hour of his character had struck; the week at hand would test what manner of man he was.

But the dinner passed quietly enough; she was still so unstrung by Cloelia's narrow escape from death that all mere pleasure had shrunk into the background of her thought. She had begged to stay at home and been so furiously assailed by Cloelia for ingratitude that the nurse urged Joan aside to humor her patient as much as possible; it was the doctor's orders. So she had hastened to apologize and promised to throw herself "soul-forward" into that strange subterranean world of music, down among life's fundamentals, groping and grappling in the dark with strong things like hate and love and revenge and the thirst for gold—Wagner's Tetralogy.

So at the table they talked of that and the traditions thereof. They had always, from the first, found it very easy to talk to each other, and she felt that she must try to appreciate it fully, in return for all her two friends' care and kindness; it would be the only true way to thank them.

When Trenly, sitting alone at the table after dinner, knocked the ashes off his cigar end and saw that his finger was trembling, he sprang to his feet and muttered angrily:

"Good God, am I going to break down?"

Presently Mrs. Conover rejoined him, after half an hour with Cloelia. She was dressed very simply, what Mrs. Poyet called "*à la Rheingold*—as there's no audience, no intermission—

an evening without form, and void, a perfect horror! I'm so glad I'm not going, to tell you the truth!"

Mrs. Conover was nevertheless a dangerously exquisite creature for a man to sit beside alone in the palpitating darkness for several hours of ever-mounting emotional excitement.

Their seats were in the first row above the tiers of boxes, full in front, on the aisle. Lieutenant Trenly had for years been familiar with every drawback of the opera house and knew what he was about. Not a single personality obtruded its disturbing self between them and the stage, only an obscure inchoate mass of souls somewhere below in the dark.

They were in a suspended world of their own, apart from all others; he was in the aisle seat, she next, and the seat on the other side empty! It is to his credit that Trenly longed unspeakably for Mrs. Poyet's presence that night of the Prelude.

Joan sat absolutely detached, wondering, bewildered, unconscious of self, after one soft murmur of childish delight when the curtain rose on that first exquisite setting of the Rhine Daughters.

Much later on Freia's motif gave her that first taste of the musician's power to emotionalize sound that was almost to overwhelm her before the Ring was at an end.

Much of what followed was dark and repulsive to Joan, like the things she had turned away from all her life, but dramatically she grasped its verities, even while longing, almost stifled, for the light to come again and the "Golden Apples" of love to return. She gave a little low laugh of pleasure when the infinite humor of Loge's sardonic music came instead. Trenly heard with her ears, saw with her eyes; he seemed merged with her in one consciousness—his own had no separate existence that first night.

Once he leaned back in his seat and, turning his eyes, looked long at the beautiful head, perfect in its simple womanliness, close beside him leaning forward in her eagerness.

Scores of women of many nationalities had come and gone in his life, and yet as he looked at Joan Conover, womanhood become once more to him the old sweet mystery, forever unsolved, the tantalizing *ignis fatuus* of a man's emotional life. Every face must be glanced at on the street; it might be that the supreme one was passing; always searching, soul-hungry, for the breathing replica of the picture stamped upon his soul.

Joan was his supreme one; he had known it from the first; but he had found her too late!

The tremulous shiver of the "Rain-bow" music had begun, and she turned toward him for sympathy in her delight. Then followed that apotheosis which returns to the old caressing song of the river nymphs; a few notes more, and it was over.

She blinked, bewildered like a child when the lights came, and laughed almost hysterically from the reaction back into the world of electricity, when he helped her on with her wrap, a very gorgeous thing, ermine-trimmed, of Cloelia's, which she had coaxed Joan into wearing to please her.

"Oh, let us walk home, please, please! It is not far and I want the air. I'm smothered, and I must talk, Mr. Trenly! I've lived a thousand years since dinner. I cannot rest until I tell someone, and Cloelia will be asleep. Do you remember that first talk we had about music in the fields between Cedarhurst and The Oaks? Isn't it strange the way it has all come about that you and I should be here together tonight? Sometimes I think it must be just a lovely dream!"

So they walked back to Mrs. Poyet's, again alone together in the world; and her voice was music to him and sang once more of the "Golden Apples."

VI

"Now, for 'The Valkyrie' you must dress quite differently," ordered Cloelia two days later. "It's everlastingly long between acts, and you see

everybody and everybody sees you, which is lots more to the purpose. I shall never, if I live as long as one of George Washington's three or four hundred nurses, forgive Mr. Trenly for poking you 'way up there—never! And you can tell him I said so! I told him tenth or twelfth row in the orchestra, if we couldn't manage to get hold of a box; and look where you are jingling around among the chandelier ornaments!"

"But he says sound rises; he says—" began Joan.

"Fiddlesticks! Going to the opera is—going to the opera! There's lots more to it than the mere sounds. Anyway, I've written a note to him and told him what he must do tonight, between acts and afterward." Every bone in her body might be found broken, but they'd never break her will, not while the breath of life was in her, she declared to the nurse later on.

And so once more the two went together into a world apart, surcharged with music's potencies. The very opening theme that night gave denotement of the greater psychical depths which soon followed. The duet at the end of the first act with its tumult of passion and ecstasy left Joan intoxicated when the curtain fell. There were hidden places in her nature that the orchestra took possession of, as if by right.

"You look tired, Mr. Trenly," she said when the lights came.

"It's a strain, that act," was all he said, trying to smile and proposing at once to take her down to the foyer, as Cloelia had ordered.

"Oh, no! let us just sit here and tell each other what the music said," cried this matronly ingénue, turning fully toward him all her splendid beauty, that had at once focused glasses upon her.

"What it said to me was so foreign to all my former thought that I am bewildered," she murmured; "may I tell you? Well, while those two were singing their souls out to each other there in the firelight and then the moonlight, suddenly there came to me an understanding of what I've read

about all my life, but had concluded was only a piece of hoary old stage property, like sheet-iron thunder. I never really believed much in it till now. Oh, music has the vocabulary! I mean what they all write about in their different ways—the instantaneous, unsought, unlicensed, overwhelming love of a man for a woman, a woman for a man. There was a terrible conviction about that music; not one note faltered—it was as logical as mathematics!”

“You—you think such love has its rights?” he said, looking away from her through his opera-glasses.

“Rights, no; but that it exists, that it is a factor in life, that’s my revelation tonight. Surely that’s enough. Oh, I’ll never get back to my little saucer perimeter, Mr. Trenly—Cloelia was right.”

“If charity in our judgments of others’ weaknesses comes out of knowledge, there’s something gained, don’t you think, Mrs. Conover? Charity has always seemed to me an old, white-haired woman with a gentle voice and smile and such a kind old hand! Faith and Hope are mere chits of girls—not in her class at all.”

The next act is so comfortably objective and full of mere scenic felicities that at its close Joan was quite ready to roam about the opera house. A sudden reckless mood was upon him; these hours out of her life were his—and after that? No deluge of suffering would ever make him regret them.

He liked the attention she attracted wherever she went, and wished from the bottom of his heart that he had the right to be proud of her; not only of her great physical charm of face and figure, but the beauty of her crystal-line soul that was stamped upon her eyes and brow and lips.

One small thing that she said when they were once more in their seats waiting for the conductor thrilled him strangely: “I wish Rush cared for music,” she sighed; “I would give years of my life if he were a man who loved it as you do.” Trenly made no response, comparing it with what she had said

the first night: “It makes me a little homesick for Rush somehow.”

He smiled; perhaps she would go a step farther tomorrow night.

The next scene left Joan breathless, trembling and cold with an emotional exaltation such as she had never known. She was sitting with clenched hands, tears running down her face, when the orchestra takes up the several motives of “Fate,” “Love’s Renunciation,” “Eternal Sleep” and “Farewell,” and interweaves them in that web of untranslatable allurements. The great red cloak enfolds the sleeping Valkyr, the “Flames” leap higher and higher in a sort of cadenced lullaby, less and less accented; a great peace broods over all. The curtain fell gently like a cloud.

Joan sat hypnotized. Not until he spoke to her did she move, and then she turned toward him a face almost convulsed with feeling and whispered:

“Do not speak to me for a moment, please, please!”

He had a swift realization of the unexplored depths of her nature, to which even she was a stranger in that moment. And again swept over him the sharp regret that her soul was not his to feed and cherish and develop. The small round of her life would soon reclaim her, and he knew better than she every fibre of the limited, shallow nature to which she was forever tied.

“It is terrible, this world of music into which you have brought me, Mr. Trenly,” she murmured, as he lifted Cloelia’s cloak; “one lives a whole lifetime in an evening. I feel all broken and tired out. I should like to slip away by myself and cry it all out, as we women do, when life gets too strong to struggle with.”

“Instead of which Mrs. Poyet has commanded me to take you to a certain café to supper, no matter what hour of the night it might be. She wrote me that if we didn’t do exactly as she said she’d crawl to her window and throw herself out! So what’s a man to do?”

And so it came to pass that a woman all in white, with an ermine opera-cloak

thrown over the back of her chair, leaned forward on her elbows across a little table and talked long and earnestly with a close-bearded, dark-eyed man opposite, also leaning toward her. Everyone noticed them and had a theory as to their relationship.

"I know, anyhow, what he'd like to be," said the woman in the corner, lorgnetted and frankly curious.

"She's a good woman—so far," said the white-haired man beside her.

One of the effects of the opera was to put all mere convention, the gentle traditions of their lives, into the background, and Joan and Lieutenant Trenly talked to each other across that little table very frankly, soul to soul, for the first time. They got dangerously near to that rarest thing in human intercourse—the truth—during that hour together. They ate their supper—every item of which Cloelia had dictated—in a dream; they knew the rooms were full of men and women in evening dress like themselves, but the dark blue eyes looked into the brown ones across from them, and all else had no reality. She told him the things that she had always longed to tell Rush, only he had always laughed and pinched her cheek and teased her into a pliable silence.

On his part Trenly told her all he dared vaguely to tell of what was fast mounting within his soul. Startled to find themselves almost alone in the restaurant, they sprang to their feet, and finding their sleeping cabman flew home through the silent streets.

He saw her to Mrs. Poyet's floor, and after inserting the key and opening the door for her, said softly:

"May I come in one moment and get a light? I think I'll smoke and walk down to the Bridge."

One shaded lamp shed all the light there was in the drawing-room.

"It's tomorrow night, you know, Mrs. Conover—or really tonight, for it's long after midnight."

"I'm sorry; for it's too much for human nerves," she answered; "there should have been an interval."

"I think so, too." He had found

the matches on the smoker's tray and filled his pocket match-box from it. Then, holding out his hand, he said good night.

"Have you had a happy evening?" he asked, retaining her hand for an instant.

"Ah, so happy!" she murmured.

"So have I," he said abruptly; and then he left, closing the hall door very softly lest Mrs. Poyet's sleep should be broken.

"He's so thoughtful about little tiny things," thought Joan as she put out the lamp.

At that very moment Admiral Sproull awoke from a terrible dream about Joan, in which he heard her calling upon him for help as she drifted out to sea, and he stood upon the beach helpless and saw her go down, far out of his reach.

The next morning Joan slept very late, and found that wonderful things had come to pass in the interval. It seemed a telegram had come from Tom Archibald saying he would be there to luncheon and "preferred steak to chops." Cloelia was in a great state of excitement, and was determined upon holding a *grand lever* in a pale pink tea-gown. The doctor had to be sent for to decide upon so awful a sick-room schism. And coming, he had said: "Of course, why not!" being the only one who knew what was ahead of the imperious creature, lying there unwillingly adjusting herself to helplessness.

And so Joan found her dressed as she had willed, lying on the outside of the bed, her face flushed and excited.

They exchanged their two stories, Joan of the evening before, and Cloelia of that morning's developments. Joan's profound enjoyment of the Ring was as wine to her friend's spirit.

When Tom Archibald came it was decided that he should see her alone for a few minutes, Joan joining them later, as the patient seemed in such an overwrought condition that morning.

"It's only a *petit lever* after all, Mr. Archibald," were her first words to him as the nurse showed him in; then tak-

ing a book she went to the adjoining dressing-room, leaving the door open between.

"It's just the size I like," growled out Archibald, approaching and shaking her left hand very gently; then he sank back into the chair placed for her visitors. "Well, have you been true to me?" he queried, with dancing eyes.

"A Penelope every minute!" she cried, delighted, as she always had been at his methods.

"Our engagement's still on then, for I'm more desperate than ever," he said cheerfully. She could not answer, she was laughing so.

"That's nice all round," he added sepulchral, "because I've come on to marry you. I was in hopes you'd notice all my good clothes! I thought of telegraphing you about the wedding, but it hardly seemed worth while, I was to see you so soon."

"The steak and chop decision was more important, then!" she pouted.

"Digestion is the cellar foundations and whole ground-floor of happiness. That plumb—all goes merrily to the weather-vane."

There was a short pause, during which she came to the conclusion that he was a better-looking man than she had remembered him to be. Then he said very quietly:

"I mean it, my dear. I want you to go back with me to Cedarhurst."

The light was instantly snuffed out of her face, and she turned away her head for a moment, and then said nervously:

"Of course I understand it's just part of the little play we began by the piano my last evening at The Oaks—but— Oh, Mr. Archibald, I can't play it any more! I feel rather pathetic and tired, and just want a— a little kindness from you, and no more jesting, please—not today, at least. Perhaps tomorrow I—"

"Why, sweetheart, it's never been a jest with me; never, even from the first, at the piano." The deep voice was so low it was difficult to understand him.

After a pause she said, her voice sharp with rising excitement: "I want to tell you something! I have told no one yet, nor must you tell, Mr. Archibald—of course you know of my accident—?"

"I am here," was his reply.

"Yes, I knew Joan would write. Well—" She struggled again to raise herself, and again fell back helpless. She began again:

"Mr. Archibald— Oh, Uncle Torm! Uncle Torm! I shall never walk again; never, never in all my life, walk again on my own two feet!" She was crying now, completely broken.

"Yes, I know," he said quietly, handing her her handkerchief, for which she was groping, blind with tears.

"You know?" she cried, facing him.

"Why, yes, I went to see the doctor, of course, before I came to you."

She began then to laugh excitedly.

"And still you keep to our engagement?"

"You said you'd take me after everything else failed, at the cannon's mouth, remember! Why, my dear child, that's where my chance comes in. Don't you see? Do you suppose I would have had a ghost of a chance with a brilliant creature like you if this hadn't happened? Your crown of thorns is my wreath of laurel, dear; don't you understand?"

"I shall be a cripple all my life on crutches," she sobbed.

"Then I'll know always where to find my wife—and that's what few men can say; and you can throw away your crutches—you'll have my two arms."

"I never dreamed that you meant it!"

"Did you ever dream that I didn't mean it? The dream is the thing!" cried he.

"Yes, day-dreams and night-dreams, since I've been lying here—and Uncle Torm?"

"Yes, dear."

"Your telegram crossed one from me. You'll find it when you go home; I—I wanted to see you so!"

His whole-souled roar of laughter

brought the nurse to the door with a frown upon her usually placid face; seeing which Archibald's hand went to his offending mouth and he looked so like a big frightened boy that even she smiled, and Cloelia's laugh was a pleasant thing to hear. A little later Cloelia said wistfully:

"But why? Why? Is it pity that moves you?"

"A little Napoleon of a word moves me, madam, four letters high. Shall I spell it for you? Or will you guess it?"

"I'll try to guess it," she replied very hurriedly.

There was some further talk, and several silences before she finally yielded her trembling left hand to him. He stroked it very gently, kissed it and then left her, and Cloelia knew that the big, tender, unselfish love she had always longed for had at last come into her life.

VII

MEN do not please women by inspiration any more than men play the violin by inspiration; the same hours of practice are as necessary to draw the best response from the taut strings of the one as from the tightly strung sensibilities of the other.

Lieutenant Trenly's habit of thoughtfulness, his little courtesies, his art in smoothing away the endless friction of life in a great city, of doing and saying the one right thing in the one right way, had its roots all over the globe, but the perfect flowering was laid at Joan's feet, and created in her memory a dangerously high standard. Should she ever again be content with the old self-centred insensibility that she had hitherto known? And would he ever be satisfied to so surround any less of a woman after the curtain should finally descend with the Fall of the Gods themselves the last night of their long journey together through the land of pictured sound?

But they had one more evening before that befell, and Archibald dined

with them on the "Siegfried" night. The bewildering announcement of Mrs. Poyet's engagement to him supplied the table-talk when the three sat down together to the hurried dinner, made brief by the early commencement of the opera.

Uncle Tom comically said that Cloelia had so coaxed him that, just to please her, he would decline the vacant seat at the opera and remain at home with her. Awful bore, of course, but the sooner a man's spirit was broken the better!

They had a gay little dinner together. Nothing was said of Cloelia's real condition, and Joan started off with the lightest heart that had yet been hers, knowing that her wilful hostess was not lying alone during the long evening, left only to the nurse's care.

Trenly looked very worn and white, and had acknowledged frankly that he had had little or no sleep, followed by a very busy morning at the navy yard. The Secretary had paid one of his unexpected visits, and that had meant "a lot of scampering about in 'glad rags'; a reception at the admiral's, and all the rest of it," he had weariedly explained.

"Siegfried," the scherzo of Wagner's great symphony, as Lavignac has called it, fell like dew upon Trenly's parched mood, and at first brought to him a great refreshment. Joan recognized with little starts and murmurs of delight the familiar motive that forms the marvelous mosaic of the Ring.

When Siegfried feels the first fret of awakening passion in the second act, and the orchestra tells his mood, his restless gropings after the great mystery, Joan thought: "So life has been from the beginning—there's a woman sleeping somewhere, waiting for the coming of the one man destined to awaken her!"

She turned toward her companion and their eyes met in the dark, electrically, and they felt that they were sharing one thought—only hers was impersonal, unrelated.

"Don't you think everyone has a

little bird singing sometimes in his life, just above out of sight, leading on and on through the forest?" she queried sadly, when the curtain fell.

"Yes, and it leads more than one man through a ring of flames, too!" he answered.

"My little bird tonight is articulate, and it sings: 'Go home, Joan Conover, Patty wants you, and the boys; you have wandered far enough—go home, go home, before the poison of pleasure steals all your silly senses!'"

It was her words and the swift realization that it would soon all come to an end, and she would go out of his life forever, that touched the man's brain, during the last tumultuous act, with a sudden madness.

Siegfried had sung his radiant "Hail to Love" after the "Awakening," and the duet had commenced which ends in the superb stretto of "The Decision to Love." Joan felt a strain on her skirt and automatically, wrapped body and soul in the music's enchantment, put her hand down to readjust her draperies. And in an instant was precipitated one of those things that leave scars on human lives. In his suffering and despair he had slipped his hand down in the dark and was sitting there holding a bit of her soft crêpe dress. He meant that she should never know; he meant to carry it through as he had begun; he meant that she should go untouched by the fire that was consuming him. And then by that chance her hand touched his and his fingers closed over it with a grasp that was like iron. He knew absolutely that she had not lowered her hand expecting to find his there; he knew the spotless purity of her soul, the perfection of her breeding; but he had reached, through the music, through sleepless nights, through days of tremendous struggling, an apotheosis of his own with many motives interlacing, and he, too, would shout "The Decision to Love," come what may!

She started violently, and struggled at once to withdraw her hand. She looked quickly behind her thinking that there was some mistake somehow in

the dark. The hand still held hers as in a vise. She started to rise and someone hissed sharply behind her. She sank down again overwhelmed, and in that moment she understood! Their two pulses beat together, bounding along like two dogs running madly in a double leash; all of her senses were merged in that one sensation of vibrating flame burning away her right hand to the bone. With bowed head, her whole being one great heart-throb, she sat waiting, straining away from him, helpless, humiliated; waiting through the final cadences. The last chords died away, the curtain came, and then the lights; and then only did he release her hand—his face as white as death.

Trembling so that she could scarcely stand, she arose and threw on her cloak before he could touch it.

"Take me to the carriage!" she ordered imperiously, all the old sweetness gone from her voice, as she swept past him in the aisle, with her head held high.

"I love you," he whispered as she passed him.

Once her long dress caught and she stooped to free herself; again, with a curious heartbroken monotony he repeated:

"I love you, that's all! I love you!"

With a sob she hurried on down the stairs.

"Find the carriage and then leave me," she said at the door, not looking at him.

"I shall see you home; you are in my care."

"Your care!" She laughed bitterly.

"Do you suppose only a saint sees all round a sin, Joan Conover?" he said harshly. "There never was a burglar creeping in the night but pictured himself hanged for murder!"

She would not suffer his proximity, however brief, in the carriage; he would not allow her to go alone; so with voices and eyes at dagger's draw they stood a moment on the sidewalk in one of those sudden human battles that are so pitiful and come alike to those who love and those who hate.

"Then I shall walk!" she cried.

"As you wish. But you are not dressed for it; you are——"

"Oh, what difference does it make! What difference does anything make now!"

So on they went beside each other, through the blaze and rush about the opera house, and then out into the quiet streets beyond. Now and then she stumbled in her haste, shrinking from him, when instinctively his hand went out to her aid.

"Do not touch me!" she panted. With a hard cynicism in his voice, new to her, he said:

"In this century people are kind to the insane, and I've gone mad tonight—you ought to be gentle with me, and not take the attitude of the fifteenth century, when they treated madness as a crime."

"Rush!" she sobbed.

"Oh, yes, by all means let's talk of Lieutenant Rush Conover!" he broke out, and then there was enough sanity left in his blood to save him from a last ignominy, and he stopped himself upon the brink.

Presently he began to laugh.

"Mrs. Poyet has had her runaway and now you are in the midst of one. There are runaways and smash-ups among men and women—and the complacent theories of a lifetime go to splinters in five seconds! I rather like it myself, after holding in till my wrists ache!"

"Mr. Trenly, you are not yourself tonight. I beg——"

"I'm very much myself tonight!" he cried defiantly. Then he poured out his soul in a torrent of words, and she flew on beside him, deaf and dumb from excess of emotion. Finally the mere relief of words brought reaction, and after a pause he cried brokenly:

"What have I done? Tell me, Mrs. Conover; tell me I have not spoiled your pleasure. The music will stay with you, will it not? Nothing will take that away, of course. And the memory will remain with you? Tell me, please tell me, that the beauty of it all will stay with you!"

"My silvery peace has gone!" she

whispered, her eyes straining on ahead. "It will not come again while I live!"

"You must not say that to me!" he cried in anguish—"that I should have been the one to destroy it!"

"Cloelia trusted you, I trusted you——" she began.

"Good God, child, I trusted myself! That's the real tragedy."

Joan swept into the entrance hall of the apartment house, he holding the door open for her. They went past the little reception-room to the elevator; he rang the bell and then they stood waiting until it descended.

"Mrs. Conover, will you let me go up with you for a moment? I cannot leave you like this. I will not! To fall asunder like this after those happy nights in dreamland together! I will not say one word to offend you; just give me one chance to step up again upon the level of my life—the level; please try and think that. You know in your heart—we have been too near each other—that I speak the truth."

Was it because she was going to yield to his entreaty that she stood staring ahead in silence? Or was it because she was too bewildered, too heartsick even to comprehend what he was saying? It will never be known, for a voice beside them said:

"At last! Well, Mrs. Conover, how do you do? And Trenly, too; good evening. This is delightful! I've been waiting a couple of months for you in that wretched little pale green reception-room. Why are so many reception-rooms done in a pale, melancholy green? Ever noticed it? The opera was long tonight!"

And there stood Admiral Sproull, in all the splendor of evening clothes, his lips smiling, his voice blithe and commonplace, his eyes sad with what he had seen in those two young faces as they passed the reception-room. He knew at a glance that Joan had indeed a great need of him.

"The children! are they ill?" cried she, clinging to his hand, unaware that she had not greeted him, as Trenly had done at once with perfect self-control in voice and manner.

"They're all right, madam, with cheeks, I assure you, like Northern Spy apples. I came on to New York on a little insurance matter. By the bye, Trenly, I'd like your advice about that."

"Take me home, please; take me home with you when you go!" cried Joan.

"Well, now you pin me down, Mrs. Conover, that's really what I came on for," he said, laughing to cover her exigency. "I have a special predilection for traveling with a pretty young woman in my care. I pretend to myself—oh, all sorts of things, eh, Trenly?"

The elevator was waiting, the door open, and turning to the young officer the admiral said in that tone that had so long impelled obedience:

"Trenly, wait for me here in that little green room, will you? We'll walk downtown together. I'll see Mrs. Conover up to her floor. I'll find you here when I return?"

"Certainly, sir."

In the elevator Joan closed her eyes and leaned back against the iron lattice.

"Take me home!" she whispered.

"I'll take you home, my dear," he said very gently. After one glance at her face he changed his mind and followed her to Mrs. Poyet's drawing-room. Throwing off her cloak, Joan started to speak excitedly, incoherently. Before she had finished the first wild sentence he said gravely:

"Will you listen to me a moment? I do not wish to know what is troubling you; I mean I do not think it wise for you to tell me. I am an old man; I know life pretty well, I think. Moreover, before I leave you, I want you to promise me that never, as long as you live, will you repeat to anyone—anyone, remember!—what you were about to tell me just now in your excitement."

"But I must speak—to be silent is to acquiesce."

"Very far from it, my child. You are silent and wise in matters connected with your children's lives and discipline; be silent and wise in all the

other phases of your womanhood—as a wife, as a friend."

"It is sheltering evil!" she protested, amazed at his tone.

"Evil? Ah, my dear, my dear! Evil is the shadow of life, and it is largely when what it covers is brought out into the sunlight of speech that it begins to breed—well, scandal among other things. Half the social crimes would cease if women, and men, too, buried the other half in silence. The sun purifies, yes, but it germinates, too. Let my experience count for you in this matter, and control that hysterical desire you have to confess—it belongs to a past age. Words give immortality to some thoughts that had better die at the birth. Do I seem harsh? Some day you will understand, I think. Tonight you are all tired out, poor little girl—most natural thing in the world! Tomorrow we'll take the Congressional Express; how will that suit you? It will be nice to see Patty again, and the boys! Can't you hear that Con talk? Just go to sleep thinking of that, and tomorrow we'll go home. I read somewhere once, Mrs. Conover, that 'the path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, *not* before them.' Good night, and God keep you! I'll come in the morning."

VIII

"THANK you, Trenly, for waiting for me," said the admiral cheerfully at the door of the reception-room.

"Great pleasure, I'm sure," murmured the lieutenant, from long habit; his fury at this interruption and detention completely hidden—so he thought.

"Were you ever so astonished in your life as at the Poyet-Archibald engagement?" quoth Sproull, walking briskly down the street beside the other. "She had retired when I called about nine o'clock. I saw the nurse; she said the happy man had just gone after a chat with the Lady Poyet. Then the woman told me where Mrs.

Conover and you were; so I came back later on and waited. Such a joy to get once more into a city where nobody ever goes to bed or even thinks of it."

The admiral did most of the talking as they walked down Fifth avenue. At a hotel entrance he stopped and asked Trenly to go in and have some "navy sherry" with him.

"Not tonight, thank you, admiral," began the other; then suddenly the terror of being alone with his regrets swept over him and he cried, "Yes, I will, too—if you'll pardon my taking it back."

"Let's have it upstairs," suggested Sproull. The dark eyes of the young officer darted a suspicious glance at his companion; but a more innocent, cheerful, kindly old gentleman in a loquacious mood he never remembered having seen.

"In my room," chatted on the old officer, "there are two armchairs, and I vow they are both so confoundedly comfortable that I couldn't read the evening paper for hopping up and trying the other one, for fear I should be losing something!"

Going up to the admiral's rooms, Yunosuke was found poking at the open fire. He turned and made that series of quick, profound bows from the waist that differentiates the Japanese greeting from all others, and he smiled broadly as he recognized Lieutenant Trenly.

Taking the admiral's coat and hat and gloves, Yunosuke started to relieve the younger man of his; but he demurred.

The admiral was lighting his cigar, and when the delicate process was finished to his entire satisfaction, he said stiffly:

"You make hospitality a little difficult, Mr. Trenly."

With a quick movement and word of apology the young officer threw off his coat and helped himself to the Scotch whisky and soda handed him by the admiral's "boy," and, still standing, he drank it off eagerly.

"Now, Yunosuke, open that win-

dow about four inches at the top, and then that's all tonight; thank you, and good night."

The "boy" bowed to each man separately, did as he was told, and slipped noiselessly out of that room to his own, where he sat half the night digging his way through Dante with the quiet persistence and yet propelling enthusiasm that mark the nation.

"Will you smoke?" asked Admiral Sproull. "Here's a Newton Perlas that will not take twenty minutes, since you seem to keep Brooklyn hours."

"Thank you, I think I will not smoke, admiral." Was it possible, Trenly wondered, that those keen old eyes had failed to gather the meaning in Mrs. Conover's face and in her unnerved cry at seeing him? Would the admiral have been so cordial if he had caught the drift of that scene?

"Poor Mrs. Conover looked all worn out; I'm afraid she's been doing too much. Music plays the very deuce with nerves, anyhow. The great Russian was about right in his Sonata story. Lord! I know all about it. The comfort about old age is that one is beyond the shock of surprise."

Trenly could not talk; he still stood holding his empty glass, looking blankly at the fire. He started when Sproull said abruptly:

"Will you do me a favor, Mr. Trenly?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Meet me halfway!" cried the admiral.

The lieutenant turned slowly and looked into the other man's eyes and—understood. Sinking back into his chair his eyes traveled back to the fire and he waited, every nerve strung for the blow he felt was coming. And so the words that followed, uttered with the utmost gentleness, amazed him:

"Man alive, Trenly! do you suppose I'm so old that I'm dead to what you are suffering? That I have no sympathy with you, that it's all for that dear, innocent, beautiful child? A wiser and more initiated woman might have saved herself and you some suffering. Sympathy, I've found, is gen-

erally withheld from those most in need of it. The one who does wrong needs it a damned sight more than the one who is wronged—half the time, we'll say. We men are such good actors that, to put it plainly, women do not help us much, do they, Trenly? in—well, this sort of thing. They don't seem to realize their power—except the devils among them. And yet, after all, the best thing on earth is a good woman; it is her standards—narrow as they are—that make human society possible."

The admiral walked to the fireplace and stood facing it, his legs apart, his back to the other man.

"I heard a story once," said the old officer dreamily, "thirty years ago, that is in point with what we happen to be discussing tonight. Once years ago—about the time you were in knickerbockers—there was a very beautiful woman, almost as lovely as Mrs. Conover, only with a different soul. She married a young ensign in the Navy. Her husband worshiped her. It satisfied her for awhile, and then came his second three years' cruise—no broken cruises in those days, Trenly, you'd better believe! She remained at home; he did not believe in women following ships about. They had no children. She met a man, a civilian—not a brother officer." Trenly stirred in his seat, his head bowed low, supported by his hand. The other continued:

"All this hasn't seen the light of day for so long that I have to grope a little to find it in my memory. Seduction is easy—terribly easy, sometimes—scarcely worth a—gentleman's while—and yet he was a gentleman, that man; and when the officer returned from sea he found his wife gone."

There was another pause; the admiral's cigar was out and he was slow about relighting it.

"I suppose all of us have felt at one time or another these strange psychic affinities with forbidden things. Heaven help us! I have, a dozen times. But a so-called love like that is never a real thing. It's that other thing we

need not name. The real thing protects a woman from a man's self—from herself, if it's necessary. There's a time when it is possible, no matter how strong the forces are within two human souls; but after that—the whirlwind! And so, I suppose, it was with those two who ruined my—my friend's life. By the bye, Trenly, do you care to hear the rest of it?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I recall the story, the husband never saw her again. Whether dead, or worse than dead, he got no news of her—of either of them. There was some rumor from Budapest once, I believe; just enough to know she had gone under. Some women survive such things and live them down; some go under. His wife went under; down where lie white skulls on which the fair hair was once soft to the touch and hollow sockets stare blankly where the sweet blue eyes laughed—"

"Admiral!" broke in Trenly, bringing his fist down upon the table in sudden violence.

"Eh? Oh, yes, I beg your pardon; I forgot where I was for a moment. I suppose I'm getting old, for I'm beginning to like to hear myself talk."

The old officer went back to his chair, and as he passed the younger man he laid his hand a moment upon his shoulder.

"Will you join me?" Sproull then asked, standing beside the table and adding the carbonated water from the siphon very slowly to his finger of whisky.

"No more tonight," murmured Trenly.

"Well, here's to the good women in the world," said the old man, raising his glass, "whom it behooves the wise man to preserve as he would his power to see the sun in the heavens above him."

There was a long silence, and then the admiral added:

"We men don't know much about each other's lives really, so it's safer to be kind in our judgments, don't you think so, Trenly?"

The other got to his feet blindly,

seized his overcoat and hat, and started for the door. Then he stopped, cleared his throat and said rapidly:

"I can't talk, admiral! I can't say a word more than—I thank you." He opened the door, closed it again and added: "I know now why every man, from the galleys to the bridge, who has ever served with you was ready to die for you! Good night, sir."

The old officer sat alone by the dying fire, with bowed head staring into the still glowing embers of his own past, a half-smoked cigar between his fingers.

IX

SPRING had again come around at The Oaks, with its old, sweet procession of flowers, filing along in accordance with the vegetable laws: hepatica, anemone, blood-root, trailing arbutus, the "May queen" of all. The dandelions were already going to seed—first sad little whisper that gray death awaited everything in that newly resurrected world of joyous spring-time.

Rush Conover's ship had been ordered home, her three years' cruise at an end. She had sailed from Gibraltar and was slowly steaming toward what the sailor calls "God's own country," with all the assurance of a man who considers that he is in a position to know, having seen all others.

Mrs. Pattison had written from the Black Forest to her brother, congratulating him upon his engagement, and turning Cedarhurst over to him indefinitely. She should never return, she added; she had found "*ein Arzt des Natur*," who had diagnosed her condition with a mirror, and the spectrum lines showed conclusively that she had not long to live. She had a *thrombus*! He was using electricity, but had no hope whatever. It was hardly worth while to return; she had arranged with the American consul for her burial. Tom would doubtless be glad to know that the hotel she was in had uncommonly comfortable beds for Germany. Her detailed wishes and

farewells followed—as indeed they did at intervals for several years, from all over sanatory Europe. In a post-script she said she had made her will before leaving home, and Brother Tom had everything. "If Sister Hester does not choose to sell the land, she can continue to take boarders and shame an honorable pedigree by her extraordinary parsimony."

This last bold statement Tom vowed should never meet his older sister's eyes.

The two adjoining estates had been of late grossly neglected by their overseer, who vibrated disconcertingly between Cedarhurst and a certain cozy apartment in New York. The letters of this pair of fantastic lovers, their telegrams, their squabbles, their inextinguishable nonsense, were a source of joy to all who knew them.

Noticing one day a marked return of the old melancholy in one of Cloelia's letters, Archibald sent a special-delivery letter to this effect:

Suspend all wedding preparations at once! I forgot to say that under no circumstances will I harbor, or protect, or allow any wife of mine to pay her own bills under my roof, if she—mark well my words—if she puts mustard in a mayonnaise! Wire at once. The suspense is terrible. If favorable, continue with trousseau, as before.

And then when, to his dismay, no answer came day after day, he told Joan his trouble. As a result, he took the night train for New York.

The next morning Joan received a telegram:

Just a ruse to see me. Mustard question O. K. Thank God!

UNCLE TOM.

It proved to be his last trip, for that very April day Mrs. Poyet was to arrive with her doctor and her two nurses, and she was to stay at The Oaks, where the drawing-room had been turned into a bedroom for her—which goes to show the effect of a love affair upon even such a white-haired, stiff-necked old spinster as Miss Hester, who hated change as few do the devil.

Archibald had not yet brought about Cloelia's final acceptance of what she called the sacrifice of tying him for life

to a cripple; but he nursed private notions of his speedy success, once get her where he could set a daily snare.

Joan had been busy all the early morning decorating the house, with Yunosuke's artistic aid, for Cloelia's welcome. Everything was full of blossoms but the George II coffee-pot, and that escaped only because Miss Hester, with almost a giddy laugh, locked it up.

Joan had moved her work-table that morning for the first time out under the oaks, not far from the Judas trees, and she was sitting there, her tired hands in her lap, her eyes looking out over the rolling hills.

Admiral Sproull was taking his belated exercise, tramping like a sentinel back and forth between the budding rosebush and the blossoming quince. Every now and then he glanced sideways at Joan's fair face and shook his head, frowning.

Waffles, with drooping ears, followed heartbrokenly at the old naval officer's heels. That his master did this sort of thing once on a time on the poop-deck of a ship he understood perfectly, but here ashore, with fifty voices calling from the woods and fields, it was not to be comprehended!

When the retired Commander-in-Chief stopped and took in the peaceful horizon, Waffles whined coaxingly, with one ear cocked up, hopeful to the bitter end.

Beautiful as ever, but also curiously changed was Joan Conover's face. The eyes held a new wistfulness, the soft lips were more tightly closed. The soul of the woman looked out through a thinner veiling of the flesh. There was no defined regret, only vague, formless visions that filled the heavens and the earth, and crouched beside her even in her sleep. Sometimes she seemed adrift upon that great sea of music that she had once crossed, and she was never alone, and the voice and the hand beside her said and did the one right thing, always.

But Rush was coming! In a few days the word "Come" would fly to her over the wires, and going she would

forget all else but the habit of her life's love, and the old joy would return to her now often lonely heart. Other wives of the returning officers had already flown from all over the land and were waiting in New York hotels and boarding-houses for their lords, to give them greeting. Joan knew it all so well; those strangely happy reunions in the Navy, that keep alive long past middle age the romance and thrill of youth. The wife sitting waiting, with flowers about, and dressed in her bridal best, listening with a full heart, fighting back the tears from sheer womanly vanity; the knock that always seems so sudden when it does come; the hallboy's voice, unctuous with interest: "This is her room, sir. Thank you, sir!" The door opens wide and is closed, one quick look between eyes that have not met for years. The man says nothing but stands with outstretched arms, the woman makes the low moan of long repression, and flies to him, and the two heads, albeit gray and in their fifties, are close together and there is a long silence before tears and laughter bring relief to both.

Joan knew it all so well; knew that she would run to him with the old cry, "Rush!" and forget all else once in his arms.

The sixtieth turn ended the admiral's constitutional, and as he stood a moment to see that the horizon contained no surprises, he thought to himself, "One more talk I'll have, as sure as I'm alive! And that's with Lieutenant Conover when he comes. He shall not escape everything; he shall be made to value that wife of his, over there, and feel the responsibility of her great beauty of soul and body. Good shall come out of all this, else there is no purpose in the struggle."

A moment later he stood beside her and said, his voice full of cheery tenderness:

"Well, we've got the very best of it, haven't we, my child?"

"The best?" she wondered, her great eyes lifted to his, still dreaming.

"Why, yes, a fresh spring morning undefiled; the happy voices of your lit-

tle ones at their play, a sound body, a sound mind and a clear conscience. Some day you'll be preaching it to Roy—you'll see!"

And then the postman came across the lawn toward them, handed Mrs. Conover several letters and a telegram and the admiral his morning paper, which arrived leisurely at The Oaks.

He was soon screened within its folds, smilingly sure of Joan's telegram and bent on sparing her happy blushes that flew to her face at bare sight of the yellow envelope.

Ripping it open, she read:

Ship arrived last night. Am well. Await letter mailed on arrival. Letter explains. Sorry.

Then she slowly opened his special-delivery letter, which had come with the telegram, and read how, at the last moment in Venice, he had thought best to avail himself of the greatly reduced cost of gold lace over there and had had it renewed on all of his uniforms, and so he was arriving dreadfully strapped for money and awfully cut up about it, full of regrets that the everlasting question of expense should come between their happiness, but forgetting to regret his special inadvertence. If she had any little fund saved up, for heaven's sake come on at once; he was simply wild to see her, etc., etc.

She did not finish it, but sat stunned, staring down at her trembling fingers as they folded her letter and replaced it in the cover. She had spent her very little all in getting ready to go to him; she had been so happy and so busy over all the dainty details of toilet with which she had so long planned to surprise and please that gay, light-minded husband of hers. She had sewed her wifehood securely into every piece of raiment that was lying ready in her room for the dear command. She had for weeks been longing, as she never had before, for it to come and end those floating dreams that filled her brain. And this was the end!

"The ship's in!" exclaimed the admiral from behind the paper.

"Yes," said Joan, and the tremor in her voice sounded like a laugh in the

old man's loving ears. She sat chilled to the blood in her veins. She had never been so in need of her husband, and so it happened that his letter was the key that is always so small a thing compared with what it unlocks.

At first the tide of disillusion came about her in a lapping wavelet, running back faster than it approached. Then higher and higher it dashed about her, receding and leaving white things like bones at her feet! A flash of intense resentment ran through her; then an overwhelming humiliation that he who alone owned the privilege of saying "Come" to her held it so lightly. She had a strong, quick sense of disproportion between her effort to meet her husband pure in thought and deed—an effort of which she was suddenly aware—and his real need of her in his life.

Conover's letter, full of a little more of self than usual, contained a dynamic force of which he remained unaware all his life.

The old man on the other side of that newspaper, hugging himself for a diplomat, might once have helped her in some indirect way, but he had taught her a lesson in silence once for which she had since been grateful. Above all things she now dreaded his next question.

Watching the paper in an agony of fear Joan slipped gently from her chair and fled over the soft grass.

No one should witness her fresh agony and shame at the selling of her wifehood for a bit of gold in the marketplace, before all eyes!

For the first time she saw her husband as he really was, and she ran like a mad thing down the lane between the hedges.

The unrelated elements in her mental life, during all that winter and spring, suddenly crystallized, and she knew in a flash why this tragedy had sprung up out of so familiar a thing as Rush's thoughtlessness and dearth of sentiment.

As she ran past the great haystack, Waffles assumed noisily that he was necessary to the full enjoyment of a

walk, but she turned upon him and sent him back in a sudden fury that left her trembling and ashamed. She was in terror lest the children should discover her, before the tumult within her was spent.

She ran past the sleepy old barn where the peaceful fowls were happily scratching and cackling out their tiny, soulless round of self-centred life. Joan's face was white and drawn and old, as she almost ran the entire length of the "mushroom meadow," seeking the shelter of the woods below.

There was a great boulder that she knew, worn by ancient waters into a sort of huge armchair. She had often sat in it and watched the flying clouds with upturned face. Breathless from her run to cover, she walked more slowly till she found the rock; and before it the little brook that was all that remained of the surging waters that had fashioned her boulder into the seat, upon which she threw herself with almost a sob of relief. Her hatless head thrown back, her eyes closed, her arms stretched out their farthest on either side, she lay for a long time, slow, difficult tears running unchecked down her face. The light pink gingham dress that she wore was almost luminous against the gray, sun-flooded rock.

It was a long time before the reaction came, and she opened her eyes and watched the few fleecy ribbons of ever-changing clouds above her. Change! That was the solution. The endless flexibility of human character, human relations, conditions, influences.

She would soon readjust herself to the cruel illumination that had come upon her with such strange suddenness; she doubtless exaggerated as one does a first impression. Even the deep wound to her pride, to her womanliness that had been slighted, would heal in time. She would trust to the law of change that governed all created things, from the rock beneath her to the fast encroaching heads of her two boys, which she had watched growing to her knee, to her waist, and

were now fast climbing to her shoulder; and then it would be her eyes, her forehead, and then—oh, then she would have lost her boys! She smiled and moved her head, and suddenly the smile fled, for there, standing before her with his hat in his hand, his head lowered in an attitude of humility and worship, stood Trenly.

She sprang erect and sat staring, panting, wordless. All else in her life slipped away from her in a great flood of feeling that took possession of her.

"I—I hope you will pardon me," he said gravely. "I was getting out of the trolley as you crossed the meadow. I saw your bright dress and I followed you."

His whole bearing toward her, the sad monotony of his voice, the change in his thin, worn face, the very fatality of his coming at that moment disarmed her, and she sank slowly back into her seat, vaguely wondering how long he had been watching her, hoping that he had missed the significance of the abandon of her tragic figure when she had first thrown herself upon the rock. Later she had smiled; she hoped he had come then, in time to see that! She watched his face, trying to read there the truth; and his eyes looked, too, and told him much more quickly the truth. That was not a happy wife waiting for her husband's fast approaching return, after three years of waiting. That was not the Joan he had first met at The Oaks. The old admiral's life story had not been lost upon him, and he had come full of an honest dread of something that he feared to formulate even to himself; never until that morning having even dreamed that he had touched so much as the outer rim of her peace. After one glance he was awe-stricken at the change in her, and he turned from the possible cause of it all, in unspeakable terror.

"You must have got my letter. I told you I was coming," he said.

"Why, no! Oh, yes, some letters came awhile ago, but I did not even read the envelopes. They are on my work-table."

The dark blood ran to his face; he smiled grimly to think that a moment ago he had been fool enough to fear that he had somehow been connected with the great change that had come over her in face and manner.

She knew that she had missed her cue, that she should have told him to go away at once. Yesterday she would have done so—perhaps; today she could not, would not. Today there were no automatic impulses, dating back to her foremothers, to come to her aid. Today it was to be a hand-to-hand affair, concentrated within the close ring of her own generation, her own character. She sat for a moment looking away from him, in silence, with dilated eyes.

"The ship has come!" she murmured breathlessly, thrusting it between them like a shield.

"Yes; I took breakfast aboard this morning and saw them all."

"Rush?"

"Yes."

"Is—is he looking well? He claims it in his despatch," she said, and could have struck herself that she could not force her voice and face to convey the old interest.

"Very well indeed. I may as well be honest. I came because I had seen him and knew you were here alone, and it was my last chance!"

She spoke hastily, ignoring his purposes and full of her own, to defeat those keen, searching eyes.

"We could not manage it, this time. I mean, my going to him, as we would have wished. I—I have been a little extravagant—the pinch had to come." Her husband's faults were her own to hide from all eyes.

"Mrs. Conover, that you have been good enough to speak to me at all encourages me to say what I came to say. May I sit down?" The fact that he asked won the woman's quick "yes," and the courteous motion of her hand toward a detached fragment of rock a few feet away.

"I came because I must hear your forgiveness of last winter's brutality before I can forget it, forgive myself,

live it down and go on. It is destroying me, the love and the self-loathing; and the fear that I had hurt your 'silvery peace,' as you called it—remember?"

He smiled, and she forgot and smiled, too.

"You received my wild letters? I have sent you several."

"I received them, yes."

"I did not know."

"They needed no answer—deserved none."

"Why, then, do you receive me like this today? I do not understand," he queried sharply.

She paused before she answered, speaking slowly, carefully:

"You came! There was no envelope to be opened at one's will. And then, Mr. Trenly, I have come, very slowly, to understand many things."

"Then no harm has come to you through my madness? I could not stand that. I'll fight it out somehow—but you—I tell you I could not stand that!"

And then she realized more than ever that he must not know the truth. She saw that she must act a little part, for his peace of mind, and send him on his way. The long training of her unselfish wifeness and motherhood gave her strength to say quietly:

"No, you have not harmed me."

"You are sure?" he demanded, again recalling that strange attitude he had found her in, before she had moved and smiled.

She frowned at his persistence and turned her head that he should not see her fast filling eyes.

"Perfectly sure," she said coldly.

"I wish you would let me speak frankly—just this once!" he cried suddenly. Her silence gave him the permission.

"When I saw Conover this morning I assumed that you had joined him. When he said not there was a look in his eyes I could not understand. I knew at once that you must be either ill or unhappy—something was wrong—so I came immediately to see if I

could help you. Can I? Is it anything that you can tell me? Is it some ridiculous nonsense about money? Or—is it something down deep in your soul that I have no right to hear? Tell me, dear, is it about Rush? You *must* be happy—it is my religion nowadays—just to keep you happy at any cost. I came to find a great change in you, in your face, your voice—something is wrong with you! I will do anything in human power to see that old look of joy in the sweet eyes; I will——”

“Yes, yes!” she cried breathlessly, “it is about Rush! I am so disappointed about not being able to go on—you can understand that?” She laughed excitedly.

“Yes.”

“Well, you see, I know the other wives are all there—it has made me blue, sensitive, perhaps jealous. It is all rather absurd, is it not?” She spoke rapidly, her eyes running from one object to another—and she wished she had sent him away at once.

“That does not sound like the truth. There is nothing in your soul as small as that!” he cried.

“I am telling you the——” She struggled for an instant to finish, and then was swept off her feet by the tremendous undertow of her own passionate nature, and she sprang up crying:

“Oh, go from me! Go at once. I cannot keep it up. I would have spared you, but you would not let me, you would not believe. Now you shall hear. I alone am not to be punished! It’s all a lie—every word I’ve said to you. In the old days I would have laughed because a little money kept me waiting for Rush: laughed, because I laughed at everything, before you came and murdered my peace, my dear, sweet, sunny life that saw no evil anywhere, that believed, that had faith in all things! It has gone forever, and my happiness has gone, too!”

“Joan!” he groaned with buried eyes, lest he see the suffering in her face.

“Why could you not have left me in my blindness, in my great, foolish joy of living in my simple way? I tell you

my eyes are open, wide; I see—I see many things, and I’ve got to go on!”

He got up and went to her, and tried to take one of her outstretched hands. But she swept him away from her with a gesture not without a certain grandeur; and stood, her colorless face, stern and impersonal, turned up to where the rift in the branches showed The Oaks framed in the great trees. He never had felt further from her than now that she had told him that she loved him. It seemed to him with any other woman on earth he would have known how to turn all this pain into pleasure; but not with her. There were plenty of others—there was just one Joan, and he adored her inaccessibility.

And yet, somehow, even then he found the right thing to say to her:

“I do not want you to do any wrong, not the least wrong while you live, dear. I want you—in my soul I want you—to be as you are—always.”

“That is what I longed to hear you say—just those words!” she sobbed, breaking down completely at last, sinking back into her seat, her proud, beautiful head hidden in her arms.

Once she spoke, brokenly:

“You will see that no harm comes to me through you—it shall be your trust—what I give you to do for me.”

“No harm shall come to you, dear,” he repeated solemnly.

Then, when she got a little more quiet, and was able to look at him with eyes as flowerlike as Patty’s own, he said very gently:

“Do you know that men almost always treat women exactly as in their hearts they really wish to be treated? We don’t monopolize all the wickedness in the world!” And it was a great joy to him to see a little smile run over her tired face as she said quietly:

“It will be a comfort to think sometimes that a scrap of the very best that is in you is mine. That can do no harm, can it?”

He could not answer.

When she spoke the great motherliness of her voice sank into his troubled heart and quieted him:

“I spoke harshly a moment ago. I

am very sorry. It is not all your fault that my heart drifted from its moorings, although you did create the storm. I am not quite so small that I do not see it clearly. It had to come some day—the awakening. Will you try to believe me when I say it is not all a loss? because we will not allow it to be a loss! Because we are going to do right, you and I. Perhaps you think I do not know what is on the other side; but I know—the music told me!"

She smiled up at him with trembling

lips, and eyes running over. He sank suddenly upon his knees beside her, and laid his head where hers had been upon the rock.

Presently she lifted one hand and placed it upon his dark head. It was not a caress, but a benediction—and he understood.

And so they parted; and as he turned away and went down through the woods, she looked up for strength to go on, and saw the children coming down toward her over the sunny meadows.



THE WOOD GIPSY

IN scarlet skirt and bodice gay,
A bold-lipped, tawny thing,
Comes brown October down the wood,
A gipsy wandering.

Her light limbs shame the leopard's lithe
Abandonment of grace,
Her dark eyes prison all the old
Wild passion of her race.

Crooning, she lifts her voice in song,
Some strain of weird romance,
And timed to clashing tambour bells,
Whirls in a wanton dance.

And ere the cadence dies away
In echoes wild and sweet,
The oaks and maples shower gold
About her twinkling feet!

HILTON R. GREER.



KNEW THE WORST

KEEPER OF THE GATES—Aren't you afraid of what the Recording Angel's book may show?

SPIRIT—No; on earth I had a candid friend.

THE LADY OF MOODS

By Gouverneur Morris

"Heart of my heart, she has broken
 the heart of me;
Soul of my soul, she will never
 be part of me—
She whom I love, but will
 never be love of me,
Song of my Sorrows—
 My Lady of Moods."

MICHAEL'S death, in the season when his promise was being fulfilled, was a shocking loss to us who loved him; and a ten days' wonder. In a land of plenty, with money in his purse, a friend by his side, and the earnestness of an unparalleled success pouring in by every mail, the man to whose robust body and vitality there seemed to cling a suggestion of immortality had died of what the doctor in attendance declared to have been physical exhaustion.

The scene of Michael's death, and of his lonely burying, the Hill station of Nuwara Elya in Ceylon, was so far removed from the obliterating roar and change of New York that we, who were most interested and affected, despaired of receiving those particulars with which it is the touching custom of a man's friends to busy their minds on the melancholy occasion of his dying. It was idle to speculate, and the tragedy, by degrees, fell away from thought and talk. But it was not one of those visitations which can be wholly forgotten, and when it was learned that Prince Laniaski, of Warsaw, Michael's companion in Ceylon, had landed in America, there was a general reviving of interest.

Prince Laniaski is a long, emaciated man, with the lofty forehead, the ivory-yellow coloring and the Virgilian profile of the early Florentine poets. He

has singularly deep-set, light gray eyes and the poise of an Oriental. In speaking English it is by deliberateness and not accent or construction that he distinguishes himself a foreigner.

"Michael," he began suddenly, and breaking off abruptly an entirely different topic, "died of physical exhaustion brought on by a broken heart."

I recalled everything I knew about Michael, which was much, and could not find any grounds for entertaining such a theory. There were plenty of vivacious flirtations to which I could have sworn, and with equal readiness I could have taken oath that in and about his native city, and in all my long and intimate knowledge of him, he had never been drawn by a serious inclination toward any woman. All this passed into my mind.

Laniaski looked at me steadily as if I had spoken aloud and immediately answered my skepticism.

"You are quite mistaken," he said. "At once well known and quite unknown to his familiar friends, there was a woman—a young girl—here in the very midst of you, who brought this thing upon him."

"I cannot think who," I said.

"Do you know a—Mrs. Jolyff?" he asked.

"Certainly," I said; "I have known her always. I was one of Jolyff's ushers."

"Five years ago," said the prince—"precisely five years. She was a Miss Carr—Miss Evelyn Carr. Michael has been dead precisely five years."

"My dear sir," I said, "there was

nothing in little Miss Carr to attract such a man as Michael. She was a light-hearted, gay little flirt, of about as much use in the world as a butterfly, and just as charming to look at."

"Almost Michael's words," said Lan-iaski, "and yet he loved her in a way that is very difficult for you and me to comprehend."

"He saw very little of her," I said; "I am sure of that."

"My dear fellow," said the prince, "it does not take long to set fire to a haystack. If you like I will tell you the truth about the affair—all that Michael told me when we were together there in Ceylon."

"Evelyn Carr!" I said. "I was never so astonished."

"Seven years ago," said Prince Lan-iaski, "she was not known to him. He was very busy hammering golden thoughts into immortal shape. Do you recall his 'Hymn in June'—in which there is a description of a young girl among the roses?"

"You do not like the piece? Nor do I. Nor does any reader of perspicacity. In it there is too little of the divine fire which so crackled among the lines of Michael's later works. It is the composition of a youth maudlinly in love. But who else could have written it?"

"Michael composed that hymn of three hundred lines extempore, standing upon a beach and addressing his passion to the sea. That is why it is so powerless—so—so rank. It was a June night, on the midnight of the night he met her, that he stood upon the beach smoking his cigar, and crying aloud to the waves of the passion and longing that were his. But as a poem it is very rank—very maudlin. June roses, a young girl, love—and death to philosophy."

"He met her at a dinner party in the country. He did not even sit next to her, he told me, but zigzag from her; she at one end of the table, himself at the other, and on opposite sides. She was then just out of the school-room, and had indeed only taken the place at the table of an older sister confined sud-

denly to bed by a touch of bronchitis. She had had her hair done up for the first time, and wore her first low-necked dress. It was of white silk, printed like a wall paper, with immense pale pink roses. Michael told me all this—once. And I have remembered."

"He said that when he took his seat at the dining-table he was a normal man of active habits, very hungry. He sat on the left of Mrs. Carr, the girl's mother, and begged her to forgive him for a few moments of gluttonous silence while he devoured his soup. 'I am so hungry,' he said, 'and the soup is so good.'

"And then he became so interested in the topic which he had started, to wit, the necessity of hunger being satisfied before conversation could begin, that his soup was taken from before him almost untasted. That was very like Michael. And then he looked up and to the left, and found that Evelyn Carr was looking at him. And he was the man to draw a girl's eyes out of her head—the lion face of him, the dancing, Saxon eyes, and the red glistening mane—the color of the lighter markings in old Domingo mahogany. He said that for some moments she would not lower her eyes nor he his; and that then, and at the same moment, as if by mutual agreement, both looked away. That episode was repeated several times during dinner. With Michael it was a sudden call to his soul. But with the girl it was not that way at all. The first time she wished to see the effect of her eyes upon a man—any man. That is how I figure it. After that she felt a real attraction. But it was not of the soul."

"When the men were left to themselves Michael said that it seemed to him as if the room had been darkened; and though there were only two lamps burning under soft shades in the drawing-room, where the ladies had gone, he said that when he entered it it seemed bright like noon. He said further that this was not mere lover's talk, but an absolute, incomprehensible, physical illusion. He went

straight to where she sat and placed himself beside her. He said:

"We were not introduced. My name is John Michael and you are Miss Carr. My dinner was spoiled because I wanted to sit by you. I have never in my life seen anyone like you—never. I think you are a very wonderful person."

"Those were his first words to her—right there in the drawing-room among all the chattering people—delivered in that quick, quiet way of speaking which was his when deeply in earnest. He said that she did not answer him, but looked straight in his eyes with a strange, questioning look, and that she moved uneasily. Then he said:

"You are going to see a great deal of me, Miss Carr, whether you want to or not. It is one of those things that can't be helped. It is not your fault nor mine. I am going to know you very well."

"His expression must have told her even more than his words. And her heart must have beaten gladly to have exercised so sudden an influence over the man whose genius was already beginning to thunder throughout the English-speaking world. But she did not say anything to him.

"Miss Carr," he said, "will you come outside? I want to talk with you. I have never wanted to talk with anyone so much."

"He stood by, expectantly. And after hesitation she stood up, too.

"Outdoors?" she asked.

"Michael was never quite sure, but he thought these were the first words he had heard her speak. He said, 'Yes, outdoors,' and they walked over to where Mrs. Carr was sitting, and Michael said:

"Mrs. Carr, your daughter and I are going to walk in the garden. It is June and there is a splendid moon."

"Mrs. Carr smiled and said something about not taking cold and not letting her little girl bore him, and they went out.

"Michael sat up in his bed when he came to that part of the narration and

cried, 'Bore me! Bore me!—*Holy Mother of God!*'

"She started across the lawn to the rose garden, instead of going by the path, but Michael stooped and laid his hand on the grass and found that it was very wet, for there was a heavy dew. And he told her.

"Does that matter?" she said.

"That was the second thing she ever said to him.

"They walked across the lawn very slowly, without speaking. Michael was unsteady with nervousness, and she, too, must have been in a state of nerves, for as they walked they occasionally swayed and came into contact with each other. She had not even put a lace over her bare neck and shoulders. And Michael said that in the moonlight they were wonderfully smooth and white, though in the house they had looked over-slender and girlish. He said that he could hear only the sound of his own feet on the grass; that her steps were so light as to make no sound. 'She drifted at my side,' he said, 'like a little cloud.'

"The night was hot and sultry, and the rose garden was full of fireflies that sparkled here and there among the sleeping roses. They walked up and down the little gravel paths, and every now and then would come into contact with each other; her shoulder touching his upper arm, his fingers brushing against her dress. They came to the end of the garden and Michael stopped and looked at her for a long time, she meeting his eyes without flinching. He said that he began to speak then, and that he did not know the sound of his own voice.

"Two hours ago," he said, "I was my own man. Now I am yours. You can do with me what you please. All the way to this place I kept telling myself that I must not speak. That was why I said nothing to you all the way. I was giving myself orders. And now I am breaking them because I cannot help it. I did not believe that things could happen so quickly. But now I know. And you know. Are you going to say anything to me?"

"He said that she looked down then and answered that she did not know what to say.

"You may call it little more than an hour," Michael said to her. "But I tell you it began longer ago than that—in Babylon, perhaps—or longer, when men lived in caves. You don't say anything to me; but why do you stand there and listen if you aren't going to care back?"

"I don't know what to say to you," she said. "Nobody ever told me that they loved me before."

"Whenever I see you I shall tell you," Michael said. "When I can't see you I shall write it to you, until finally you are compelled to love me back."

"But," she said, "supposing it doesn't come to me, too?" And Michael told me that she had the expression of a little child who is puzzled—deeply puzzled about something or other. He stepped backward three steps deliberately and she stayed as she was.

"If you stay where you are," he said, "I am going to take you in my arms and kiss you. But I am giving you a chance to get away."

"She did not move."

"Michael told me that when little more than a boy he had nearly died of thirst somewhere in one of the great American deserts, and that water, when at length he found it, had not seemed so sweet to him as kissing that girl. At first she stood passive while he held her to his breast and kissed her, but after a time she began to cry and to kiss him back, and at the same time to struggle and push against him with her hands. Then he let her go."

"She retreated a few steps and stood looking at him."

"He could not," he said, "for some time see her distinctly. She was vague and diaphanous to his eyes, like an object seen under water by a diver. And he said that it did not seem to him possible to draw sufficient air into his lungs to fill them. When this passed he went to her and took one of her hands in both his."

"God knows," he said, "that I

didn't go for to make you cry.' Tears filled his own eyes as he spoke. 'My girl mustn't be afraid of me. I love her too much—that's all—too much.'

"After that they walked up and down in the rose garden for awhile with their arms about each other. And every now and then they stopped, and he would strain her against his breast and kiss her and be kissed back. Then they went back to the house——"

"Prince," I said, "do you know that I was at that very dinner party of the Carrs'? And I remember, though I had forgotten, that Michael and Evelyn did go for a walk. And I remember them as they came in. Did Michael throw any light on that phase?"

"No," said the prince. "How was it they came in?"

"They looked bored," I said. "Her hair was not even rumped—Jove, how it all comes back!—her dress—the white one with the wall-paper pattern—was heavy about the bottom from the dew and stained with green from dragging over the grass. They were the most self-possessed young people you ever saw. And do you mean to tell me all that—that business had been going on outside?"

"It was exactly as I have told you," said the prince. "It was later on that very night that he stood upon the beach under the starry sky, and chanted his 'Hymn in June' extempore to the sea. The man must have been half mad with passion and joy—but the hymn, after all, is very youthful and rank."

"But who else could have made it?" I said. "And then what happened?"

"After that," said the prince, "the most interesting phase began. We are confronted with the problem of a young girl who, to all intents and purposes, has given herself to a certain man, who loves him, who desires him—and who avoids him. You have remarked that Michael saw very little of her. That is quite true. She would not let him. He wrote to her every day—sometimes many times in

one day—for nearly two years. I would like to have those letters. But it seems she destroyed them—after, I dare say, showing a few to her most intimate friends. She was capable of that. She destroyed them—she destroyed the glory of a mighty heart as it has never before been expressed. She destroyed the letters—and in due time Michael. I have seen some of the little notes which she addressed to him at this time—careless scrawls full of excuses. For the most part they were written on rough bluish paper, often blotted; and when I saw them they were stained by the sweat of the man above whose heart they had lain by day and night. Such phrases as these ran through them, much underlined: ‘I am *terribly* sorry, but mama *positively* says that I *must* go to Boston with her’; ‘Your letter *must* have gone astray, because I *never* got it, or I *surely* would have been at home when you called’; ‘*Please* don’t be angry with me, but I *honestly* couldn’t be there, after all!’

“For the most part she dodged him, as you might say, but now and again there were meetings between them; quite often, indeed, in public; but rarely alone. Yet when they were alone she was all that she had been to him in the rose garden, and Michael has told me he believed she might have been more. Yes; once they were somewhere—I have forgotten where—alone, in some woodland by the sea, I think, late in the afternoon, and Michael was pleading with her to say on what day she would marry him. But she would not say on what day. Then Michael took her in his arms and kissed her, and she kissed him back, many, many times.

“Michael kept saying, ‘I want you so—I want you so!’

“And suddenly she hid her face in his breast, and trembled violently and said, ‘Then for God’s sake take me!’”

“In the name of everything,” I broke in, “why wouldn’t the little fool name a day and have done with it?”

“Because,” said Laniaski, with more than his usual deliberation and with a ring of bitterness in his voice, “it seemed in those days that our poor friend was destined to become immortal rather than—rich.”

“He became both,” I objected.

“But not in time. Listen, my friend. That girl was a devil. She was the worst kind of a devil that is known. She loved our friend passionately, and she would not marry him because she feared to be poor. She kept away from him lest her very love for him should prevent her from making a rich marriage. That day, in the wood, was the only time that she said or meant a generous thing. For his own sake it is the greatest pity in the world that Michael was a gentleman; otherwise she would have been obliged to marry him.”

“Better, perhaps,” I said, “for him to be dead.”

“I think not,” said the prince. “It may sound strange to you after what I have said, but I think she would have made him a good wife. She loved him; of that there is no doubt. It was not a spiritual love, but let the term pass. She loved him. If she had married him then and there, I think all would have been well, for it was not long before money began to come to Michael in whole showers—literally in showers.

“But you can see why she was afraid to be with him, that is, from her point of view, having no wish to marry him. The end came like this. One day Michael, without sending word that he was coming, called at the Carrs’ house in the country, and the maid told him that Miss Carr was somewhere in the garden; but she did not tell him that she was not alone. You have guessed, of course, that she was with Jolyff? Yes, in a sequestered nook of the rose garden. And what do you think she was doing? She was returning something that Jolyff had just given her—putting it exactly where it had come from—on his lips.

“Michael walked right up to them.

"I had understood that you were alone," he said to Miss Carr. "It was quite by accident that I saw what happened just now—but I thought it better to let you know that I had seen. Are you and Mr. Jolyff going to be married?"

"She looked him straight in the eyes. And I will say that she was no coward to say what she did—and so proudly.

"I would hardly, Mr. Michael," she said, "kiss a man that I did not intend to marry."

"Come, now, my friend, can you believe that?" said the prince. "Yet I have Michael's word for it, and, as we both know, he never lied."

"What did Michael do?"

"He felt for a moment as if spiders were stringing cobwebs in his head, and then his brain got wonderfully clear and full of notions. He turned to Jolyff and smiled.

"Mr. Jolyff," he said, "would you like to see something really quite remarkable?"

"Jolyff stammered and blushed as a man will who has just been caught behind a hedge kissing a girl.

"Michael made one stride to Miss Carr, crushed her to his breast, and kissed her over and over on the mouth. At first she struggled. Then she began to kiss him back. Between kisses he commanded her to say that she loved him, and she said: 'I love you—I love you.'"

"I'm damned," said I, and could hardly keep from laughing; "and what in heaven's name did Jolyff do?"

"Jolyff?" said the prince. "Why, he kept saying, 'I say, man, what are you doing?' over and over, he kept saying that."

"But he married her after all?"

"He did," said the prince. "She was very clever. But it is easy to see why Jolyff has never thrown any light on Michael's broken heart."

"And do you mean to tell me," I said, "that I was an usher at—at that wedding?"

"I have your own word for it," said the prince.

"I lied," I said. "I lied."

"Six months after they were married. Most of that time I was with Michael in Sumatra and the Straits Settlements. During that period—at the very beginning of it—his 'God in Heaven' was published. By every mail came fabulous royalties, and letters of fabulous adulation from all sorts and conditions of men among whom the English tongue is spoken. God! How that poem thunders! . . . for the ages of ages! . . .

"Poor Michael! He is dead and we are alive—sipping our tea, watching the traffic of the Avenue, discussing affairs of the heart. Tonight we are to dine and go to the play. And Michael lies there in Ceylon upon the top of a hill above the clouds, deep in his grave, covered with rocks lest the wild dogs should dig him up—dead, decaying, passing back into the womb of the great mother—and yet living with a glory which comes to but one man in hundreds of years—with a life that is to this existence of yours and mine as flame is to ashes. . . .

"Adulation and royalties were not what the poor fellow needed. He became emaciated—thinner even than I, and I weigh less than a hundred and twenty pounds for all my height and endurance. I thought his trouble organic at first. His appetite was good, but food did not seem to nourish him. I thought that his stomach needed attention. But it was his heart.

"I persuaded him out of that rank, stenching island of Sumatra, and got him with me to Ceylon—to Nuwara Elya in the hills. There was a good doctor in that place, very gentle and wise—for a wonder an Englishman—and he tested and examined our poor friend, but there was nothing to ascertain. His heart was broken, that was all. The involuntary act of keeping it at work pumping was exhausting him—exhausting him and starving him. His room was next to mine. Often I went and sat with him in the night, and piece by piece he told me why he was dying.

"But," I would say, "that girl did

enough to bring any sane man to his senses, let alone you, my dear friend. Forget her—the little cat!”

“Even that did not comfort him. He would tap on the sheet—he was covered only by a sheet, and the contours which his body gave to it were the contours of bones—knees, ribs; all very shocking—he would tap on the sheet with his poor wasted fingers, and smile into my face.

“‘Lani,’ he would say; ‘dear, simple old Lani!’

“During those last days he sang a great deal, propped up in his bed. He would have his bed wheeled to the window—his room was on the ground floor, and there was a double hedge, half calla lilies, half heliotrope, as high as a man, that looked in at him through the window. And he would sit there and look out and sometimes sing. You remember how loud and sweet a voice he had—like—yes, something like a negro’s? God, how he could sing!

“One night I was wakened by the sound of his singing, and I said to myself, ‘Good, he is amusing himself,’ and turned half over, the better to listen. He was singing a canticle out of some church service—that which comes at the very end. How do you call it?”

“The Doxology?” I suggested.

“Yes; that was it. And it seemed to me in my drowsy state that nothing ever could have sounded so loud and beautiful and sweet.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

“Then the house became quiet, but presently I heard footsteps in the hall. They stopped before Michael’s door, and I heard a sound of knocking and the whining voice of our landlord.

“‘Mr. Michael,’ he said, ‘I’m very sorry, sir, but it’s after hours, sir, and there’s a lady in the ’ouse as says she can’t sleep for the racket, sir.’

“It was after hours, my friend, and John Michael lay dead in his bed.

“At about that time,” said the

prince, lowering his voice, “sixteen thousand miles away, Mrs. Jolyff and her husband were starting on their honeymoon. . . . I hope that some time while I am in town you will point her out to me.

“We could not get a coffin up to that high station in time, and so we buried Michael as he was, in his sleeping suit, and covered him with rocks so that the wild dogs should not dig him up. He had told me that, like Stevenson, he wished to be buried on the top of a high hill—on the top of Pedro, that tall mountain which overlooks nearly the whole of Ceylon, and is so often above the clouds. It was a long day’s work.

“As he lay by the side of the grave which we had caused to be dug, his hair, that gorgeous mahogany-red hair of his, touched by the sun, crowned his white face like an aureole, and it seemed to me that we were about to consign to the earth—a martyr.”

A victoria had drawn up in front of the Holland House, and a lady was giving cards and directions to a smart little tiger in dashing livery. The lady had a child with her in the victoria—a tiny mannikin of about two years.

“Prince,” I said, “your wish to see Mrs. Jolyff is easily granted. She’s calling on somebody in the hotel at this moment and is sitting outside in her victoria.”

“So that is she,” said the prince. “Will you present me?”

We went out bareheaded.

“Mrs. Jolyff,” I said, “may I present Prince Laniaski? He was with our old friend Michael in Ceylon when he died.”

“Truly?” said Mrs. Jolyff. “Were you *really*, prince?”

The prince bowed mechanically. He was not looking at her, but at the child, who for some unaccountable reason appeared almost to be attracting the eyes out of his head. I have never seen a gentleman—nor indeed anyone—stare so at anything. He turned to Mrs. Jolyff with a start.

“Yes,” he said, “I was with him.”

“You must dine with us some

night," she said, "and tell us about him. Will you?"

"Madame," said the prince, "I have traveled a great many thousand miles to tell you that I would rather enter the den of a rattlesnake."

He bowed, and with one last look at the child went back into the hotel.

"*You* presented that man to me!" said Mrs. Jolyff, very white about the lips.

"Yes," I said. "Forgive me—I didn't know that he was ever taken like that—but he has had strange experiences and has listened to stranger stories. Good-bye."

The prince was back at our table, sitting with his chin between his hands. I sat down facing him. At first he did not seem to see me. Then he drew a long breath.

"My friend," he said, "that woman

looks like a woman who—who is on her honeymoon."

That was almost the last thing that I would have expected him to say.

"How long," he went on, "has Michael been dead? It is five years, is it not?"

"Yes," I said.

"How old is that little boy of hers?"

"About two."

"Have they others?"

"No."

"Strange," said the prince, "very strange, for it passes all reason."

"What is so strange?" I asked.

"The child—the child," said the prince, with some show of impatience. "Did you notice nothing peculiar about the child?"

"No," I said. "What?"

"Man," said the prince, "he has Michael's eyes and hair!"



A HAPPY THOUGHT

SHE—My friend over there is a poor conversationalist. She says she can't think of anything to talk about.

HE—That's truly remarkable. By the way, why doesn't she have her appendix removed?



SHOULD BEGIN EARLY

BOBBY—Pa, I want to be a gentleman when I grow up.

WISE FATHER—It will be too late then, my boy.



KNOW only the best people—for you to know.

THE EPIDEMIC

By Arthur Macy

I AM feeling decidedly grippy,
And the lady who stands by my bed
(The reverse of the scolding Xantippe)
Is caressing my agonized head.
I assure you it's madly provoking
To be dosing with potion and pill,
Getting comfort not even from smoking,
Which is surely a sign that I'm ill.

This morning my wife made my toilet,
But the part in my hair doesn't suit,
For she managed completely to spoil it
With angles obtuse and acute.
She insists it's an absolute straight line,
And seals the remark with a kiss,
But if that's her idea of a pate line
I will part my own hair after this.

Yes, I'm down with the great epidemic,
Feeling older than dear "aged P."
So frequently mentioned by Wemmick
When Pip went to Walworth to tea.
(Do you notice the "Wemmick"? How clever,
How exceedingly fitting and pat.
Now, really I think that I never
Made a rhyme that was better than that.)

(I've a secret; perhaps you don't know it.
Let me whisper it under my breath:
When a person once thinks he's a poet
There is nothing will stop him but death.
And Shakespear knew what was the matter
As he scribbled from breakfast to tea.
Like Remus's rabbit, "he hat ter,"
And that's just the trouble with me.)

I'm alternately sleeping and waking
With a fever and now with a chill.
And with dread I am constantly quaking
At the thought of the subsequent bill.
Though I cannot think sickness a blessing,
I accept it as something that's due,
But it seems to me rather depressing
To be ill and to pay for it, too.

THE SMART SET

I gaze at the walls and the ceiling,
 And the pictures of land and of sea;
 And though sure that the artists had "feeling,"
 I am conscious they left some for me.
 Then I hear that disquieting cuckoo,
 And I venture to make the remark
 That people will never have luck who
 Own clocks that do nothing but bark.

And now I take refuge in Boswell
 With the hope of forgetting my woes,
 And heartily wish that I was well.
 (My grammar is bad, but it goes.)
 And I read on sincerely and truly,
 But in the condition I am,
 Get pleasure not even from Dooley
 Nor the verses of Omar Khayyam.

I am feeling so sore and rheumatic;
 I've a pain all the length of my spine,
 And my head feels so queer and erratic
 I can hardly believe it is mine.
 But I'm learning the art of obeying
 The voice of a dominant will:
 And that voice at this moment is saying,
 "My dear, it is time for your pill."



A MAN OF MEANS

WILLIAMSON—Your friend owns a handsome automobile. He must have money.

HENDERSON—Oh, lots of it. Why, he can afford to run over the most expensive people in the city.



A NARROW ESCAPE

WATERS—You say you were well acquainted with my wife before I married her?

BRIDGES—I should say so! Why, my dear fellow, I came dangerously near not getting out of marrying her.

A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF STEPHEN GIRDLER

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

AT intervals—rare intervals—Stephen Girdler touched earth. The shock of these collisions with the mundane and material caused him to rub his eyes and look about him, as it were, in a kind of dull amazement at the discovery of its existence; but he was presently away again, drifting serenely through the clouds of fancy or the pure, colorless ether of introspection. For want of a better word his kinsfolk and acquaintance called him absent-minded; but Stephen Girdler was absent-minded only in the sense in which Shakespeare was of a literary bent or Napoleon interested in strategy. The term, in short, was no more adequate to comprise the extent of his abstraction than is a dandy's monocle to comprehend the solar system.

Girdler's perpetual preoccupation was not a development of later life, though he had already completed four-sevenths of the Psalmist's span. With him it had been "ever thus, from childhood's hour." Reverie had been wont to descend suddenly upon him at school in the very midst of the five-table or that inspiriting epic of the see-saw which, from the pages of the primer, proclaims dramatically:

Up, up we go.
See us go up.
We can see all the town.

Then his chin would drop and his very blue eyes grow wider and stare away into vacancy. He would only be recalled to a sense of the present by the slap of a switch on the teacher's desk, or, more often, on his own red knuckles. The other pupils gaped at

him; the teacher, a gaunt, angular spinster, who subsisted on tea and the poetry of Felicia Hemans, set him down as "wanting." She made no attempt to understand him—could not have understood him had she tried. No one, from first to last, understood Stephen Girdler—unless it was Mrs. Jabish Roberts, who came near thereto from the very outset. But this is to anticipate. He lived in a world of his own, a world of clouds and dreams and castles in the air.

As he grew up he passed many of the pleasures and privileges of life as he passed his acquaintances in the street, looking straight into their eyes, touching them, even; but serenely oblivious of their significance, their very presence. And Life is strikingly human in her sensitiveness to rebuff. When what she has tendered has been once refused, ignored or taken without thanks, she is chary of proffering further favors. Those who might have been Girdler's friends made allowance for his oversights, but it was an allowance not uncharacterized by limits, and these limits he was not long in reaching. Disregarded invitations, unanswered letters, names forgotten, faces looked into without a sign of recognition—all these were factors in the gradual elimination from his life of the humanizing element of society. Year by year the possibility of fellowship and friendship receded from him on every side, like a tide which swells to the foot of some grim cliff, touches it with a tentative caress and then, receiving no response, ebbs silently away.

In nothing was the abstraction of

Girdler more marked than in its blindness to its own consequences. It was not that he lacked tenderness, for advancing years made him singularly gentle, but simply that he did not see. The world of action and acute emotion swirled about him without effect. When in the least degree he responded to its influence it was, almost invariably, because it had disturbed him. It was, like the shrinking back of a zoöphyte from the intruding and irritating effect of altered temperature or light, instinctive, almost automatic. Little by little, in a series of such regressions before troubling influences, he came to be much alone, not often out of doors, but constantly with his nose in a book or the tip of his penholder between his lips and his very blue eyes staring away out of his study window, as he carefully formed and reformed some sentence in his life work, "The Relation of Eschatology to Belief."

At forty he had practically buried himself in his quarters on the top floor of an apartment house on Beacon street, in the company of Plato, Proclus, Bacon, Spinoza, Locke, Darwin, Kant, Hegel, Comte and the rest, and was rarely aware whether he had lunched or not or what particular day of the week it might chance to be. He was quite gray, stooping, mild-eyed, with purposeless hands and a premature shuffle. And Gustave, while bestowing much thought upon the fare, as will hereinafter appear, regarded him with supercilious contempt.

It was the opinion of Gustave that the lines were fallen unto him in pleasant places, and he was right. Girdler had undeniably engaged him as cook and general servant during one of the fleeting hours when he touched earth, and found himself interviewing the first applicant to reply to the advertisement inserted for him by his sister; but the philosopher, the bare details of their future association once agreed upon, vanished again into the mists of idealism, from which, thereafter, he emerged only as Gustave called his attention to the fact of wages due.

Gustave himself was of the fat, oily and shiny appearance which, in some fashion inexplicable, is so apt to accompany proficiency in the compounding of salad dressings. He prided himself, and justly, upon his cooking. His *tripes à la mode de Caën*, his *filet de sole cardinale*, his spaghetti and his *pêches flambées* were nothing short of inspirations. They caused one to rate Brillat-Savarin on a par with Mahomet or Martin Luther—as the founder, that is, of a religion. Gustave could fold a napkin so that it resembled a frigate under full sail. Gustave burnt butter to the infinitesimal point of perfection between too little and too much. Gustave handled tarragon as an expert handles nitro-glycerine—with the same avoidance of shocking casualties, the same inspired achievement of stupendous results. Gustave could peel an orange into a twin-brother likeness to a chrysanthemum. Gustave could hollow out a baby pineapple, stuff it with a delectable mixture of chopped apples, maraschino cherries, celery and its own extracted vitals, and pop on the top again so that no one would have imagined it to have been tampered with or even touched. And such things, if not in all respects the same, did Gustave do for the initial dinner which it was his privilege to prepare for Stephen Girdler. At seven o'clock he sailed triumphantly up to the door of the philosopher's study, flung it open and proclaimed, with an air, that *monsieur was servi*. Then he returned to the dining-room, assumed a Louis Quatorze attitude against the sideboard and awaited with confidence the logical stupefaction of his new employer.

When Mr. Girdler took his place at table his mild and dignified countenance was boarded up, like the doorway of a city residence in midsummer, with the covers of a work by Master Immanuel Kant. For full two minutes he made no movement, except to turn a page. Then one purposeless hand started on an uninspired journey of discovery, came into contact with the elaborately folded napkin, fumbled

helplessly and briefly with its complications, and finally deposited it in an abject wad upon his knees. He had not so much as looked at it!

Gustave served the *filet de sole*, and Mr. Girdler turned another page.

That was the beginning. The half-hour which followed was the most humiliating in Gustave's previous or subsequent experience. Once only did his master fairly lay his book aside. He had succeeded, without the most remote evidence of direct volition, in spearing and conveying to his mouth some fragments of the native flounder, now metamorphosed by *sauce cardinale* into a sole; and once, placing his book upon the table, with his eyes still glued upon the page, had hewn for a moment at a chop. Before this operation was productive of a result, however, Master Kant had something to say:

Empirical universality is only an arbitrary extension of the validity from that which may be predicated of a proposition valid in most cases to that which is asserted of a proposition which holds good in all.

Instantly Mr. Girdler's face was boarded up once more. Gustave served the salad—some shreds of which were in due time absorbed.

But now the philosopher fairly discarded his reading, and peered mildly at the dish before him, with the air of polite but puzzled inquiry observable in those unable to recall ones suddenly addressing them.

"Er—what is this?" he asked, touching it tenderly with his fork.

For an instant Gustave, catching hopefully at this thin evidence of interest, beamed with pride and pleasure.

"*Omelette soufflée, monsieur*," he explained, with a suave bow.

Mr. Girdler looked up at the ceiling.

"Necessity and strict universality," he observed, with an air of profound conviction, "'are infallible tests for distinguishing pure from empirical knowledge.'"

He picked up Immanuel Kant and rose.

"And, oh—er—Auguste," he added,

pausing at the door, "you may keep the—er—dessert until tomorrow."

He was gone.

Auguste! *Au-guste! Au-guste!* And "keep the dessert until tomorrow." *Mon Dieu! Keep an omelette soufflée!* Ah, name of a name of a good name, then! Name of a name of a name!

Thus Gustave, in the kitchen of Stephen Girdler's apartment. He ranged his disregarded creations before him in a row, like the awkward squad of which he had once been a member, in the barracks of Bordeaux, and addressed them, as he and his comrade *bleus* had been addressed by the drill-sergeant, after their first parade. It had been a feature of the drill-sergeant's harangue that he talked *through* the squad at the colonel, who had commended him, a moment before, upon his "sacred inefficiency."

It was a peculiarity of Gustave's that he declaimed *through* the offenseless viands at the base-born, ignoble, revolting species of a type of a stove broken down, in whose name-of-a-name service he had the unbelievable calamity to find himself. And thou, gargoyle of a sole!—wast thou then an exhibit at the Exposition of '89, and therefore now unfit to eat? And thou, camel of a chop!—wast thou plated, or waterproofed, or varnished, or what, to be thus impervious to the knife? And thou, example of an assassin of a salad!—what then? Wast thou for the pigs? *B'en!* Even the pigs would not touch thee! (This last, with tremendous and telling emphasis!)

When it came to the *omelette soufflée* Gustave fairly bowed his head upon his hands and wept. Upon it he lavished his most extravagant terms of endearment—"my cabbage, my angel, my Benjamin, my pigeon!" His emotion exhausted, he disposed of the dainty in ten mouthfuls, and, to some extent, was comforted.

In his study, Mr. Girdler, with the tip of his penholder between his lips, and his very blue eyes fixed on vacancy, was formulating a commentary

upon Master Kant's further assertion that "when strict universality characterizes a judgment, it necessarily indicates another peculiar source of knowledge, namely, a faculty of cognition *a priori*."

Truth to tell, Mr. Girdler had somewhat overdone it, had rather turned the poniard in the wound. He might at least have sampled the *soufflée*. It would, to be sure, have done him no appreciable good: but it could, on the other hand, have done him no additional harm, because his status as a man of the world, or even as one in possession of normal faculties, was irretrievably lost, so far as Gustave was concerned, from the moment when he failed to notice that faultlessly folded napkin.

On the following day Gustave tried a few experiments. He carried *mon-sieur's* shoes out into the kitchen, with a magnificent display of particularity, swung them gravely three times about his head, and returned them to the spot where he had found them. He inquired whether *monsieur* would take tea or coffee for breakfast, and, on being told coffee, deliberately served him tea. He entered the study four times in the course of an hour to ask one and the same question in regard to replenishing the fire. Finally, he diluted the Chateau Margaux to half-strength at the pantry faucet, and served it with unimaginable dignity.

Throughout the course of these machinations he was prepared, at the least sign of remonstrance, to prostrate himself, with elaborate expressions of innocence and regret. But there was no objection. Girdler passed the day deep in Spinoza's "Ethica." He put on the unblacked boots serenely, revolving the definitions in his mind. He contentedly drank the tea he had not ordered, digesting the axioms meanwhile. He courteously replied, "No, thank you," to each of Gustave's four identical questions, pondering upon the distinction between the *natura naturans* and the *natura naturata*.

Now, was it to be expected that, at dinner, the fact that the Chateau Margaux was diluted could percolate into a brain already occupied by the theory that "the sequent itself is antecedent to some subsequent change, and the former antecedent was once only a sequent to its causes"? But Gustave had carried to a triumphant conclusion a demonstration which boasted at least the virtue of immediate significance over any of Spinoza's.

"The ancient onion," he remarked aloud, when he was once more in the kitchen, "observes nothing of what goes on around him. *Houp-là alors!*"

As may be inferred from this playful exclamation, it had just dawned upon Gustave in what pleasant places his lines were fallen unto him. He hastily swallowed his dinner, piled all the dishes together in the pan, ran the cold water briefly upon them, sallied forth jauntily to a billiard saloon of which he wotted, and returned at midnight, very pitifully drunk.

Thus was the keynote to the position sounded. It was plain to Gustave that the easiest, as well as the most agreeable, method of procedure was simply to follow the dictates of his own ingenious fancy. He continued to provide his employer with the most tempting viands, but purely with the view of feasting afterward in person upon the surprisingly adequate remains. His other duties were distinguished by the alacrity with which he did not perform them. On the rare occasions when the boots were cleaned at all the result was achieved with stove polish, which, unlike ordinary blacking, with three strokes of the brush produces a certain effect—not a striking effect, to be sure, but quite good enough, as Gustave assured his friend, the grocer's man, for such a thirty-centime dream-book as Stephen Girdler.

During the morning hour supposedly sacred to house-cleaning Gustave's feather-duster suggested, more than anything, a particularly fastidious

humming-bird. It whirled in midair, it hovered, it dipped, it rose, but it rarely lighted, and then for an instant only. One might trace the sole results of Gustave's dusting by clean spots, no larger than vaccination scars, here and there in the vast expanse of accumulated dust. After a fashion, he made the beds; after a fashion, he cleaned the silver; after a fashion, he washed the dishes; but it was all after a very debonair and casual fashion, which left no wrinkles of anxiety or overwork upon his face, as fat, white and expressionless as the breast of a boiled goose. He bought enormously of the grocer's man on a basis of co-operative commissions; wore Stephen Girdler's clothes, drank his wine, invented each day a new and more ingenious epithet for that unconscious worthy, spent every evening in the billiard saloon aforesaid, and returned invariably very pitifully drunk indeed: for all of which he received the sum of fifty dollars a month for the space of three months, and might be receiving it yet had it not been for Mrs. Johnny Vail, in the first instance, and, in the second, for Mrs. Jabish Roberts.

Mrs. Johnny was Stephen Girdler's married sister, a conspicuously trim and continually busy little woman, with smart clothes, a keen eye and a crooked smile over white and even teeth. She went through life at a hurling rate of speed, doing, in one way or another, a vast deal of good. Her charities were of the broad, sane and wholesome kind which are concerned more with those who lack the means, but not the will, to help themselves than with the merely limp. Her enthusiasms were books, Russian brass, music and John Vail 2d—at just this period, three years of age; but she found time, once a quarter, to drop in upon her brother Stephen.

Her visits would have borne less resemblance in length and frequency and more in general character to those of angels had it not been for an impression, not illogically prevalent in the circle of the Girdler family, that Stephen profoundly desired to be let alone.

To the energetic Mrs. Johnny the dreamy-eyed philosopher appeared to be in little better than a state of chronic coma and she cared somewhat less than nothing for "The Relation of Eschatology to Belief"; but after all he was her brother. As such he not only had, as she conceived, a certain claim upon her, but bore, as toward her, a certain responsibility. Now, having satisfied the claim by an account of her doings and plans, she laid siege to the responsibility, as she drew down her veil and carefully put on her gloves.

"The trip will do you good, Stephen. You need a shake-up now and again; and, all said and done, it's only for four days. As soon as we sail you can come straight back to—to all this." And she pointed one slender forefinger at the manuscript with a pretty air of disdain. "You haven't seen New York in five years," she added, "and that amounts to saying that you've never seen it at all."

"I don't see how I can manage it," responded Girdler, vaguely troubled. "I don't like to leave the apartment. My books——"

"Are sadly in need of dusting," put in his sister promptly, "as is everything else about the place. So far as I can judge you have what my friend Mrs. Roberts would call an 'eye-servant,' Stephen. And, by the way, she'll be the very person to come in and give the apartment a thorough cleaning while you are gone."

"Mrs. Roberts?" repeated Stephen, in a tone of mild inquiry.

"Yes—Mrs. Jabish Roberts. Haven't I ever told you about her? She's a most wonderful person who lives in Salem and can make anything, from a mattress to a political speech. She opens and closes the Beverly house for us every year—quite the most capable woman I've ever known. She'll come in the day you leave and be gone by the time you come back, leaving everything as neat as a pin. I'm only sorry you won't have a chance to hear her talk; that's the best part of her. But I forget—that wouldn't appeal to *you*."

She tilted her chin at him and rose. She had taken a good deal for granted, but that was characteristic of Mrs. Johnny Vail. She was accustomed to getting what she wanted, and this instance was no exception to the rule. One week later Stephen Girdler actually accompanied the Vails to New York to see them off to Europe. At the last moment he essayed a final, feeble protest:

"Really, Constance, I don't feel like leaving the apartment."

"Well, it's too late to change the plans now," retorted Mrs. Johnny firmly. "You have your ticket and Mrs. Roberts is coming tomorrow. It's all arranged. And, besides, it isn't proper for *anyone* to stay cooped up in one place, month in and month out. It's worse than the Eskimos, who sew themselves up in their clothes and stay that way for a year at a time!"

So Girdler tore himself away, with a regretful sigh, and the following morning Mrs. Jabish Roberts made her appearance on the scene.

Mrs. Roberts was a widow, slightly on the further side of forty. She was small, wiry, energetic and scrupulously neat. Her eyes, from behind her gold-rimmed spectacles, fairly snapped. She was never wholly idle. Apart from the fact that her tongue was, as she euphoniously expressed it, "hung in t' middle, so's it could waggle at both ends," she was continually looking for something dusty, broken, torn or out of place, and remedying the deficiency upon the spot. Even as she waited for Gustave to answer the bell of Stephen Girdler's apartment, she bent down suddenly, squinted at the tarnished brass doorknob, and then ejaculated, "Humph!"

Since Columbus appeared before the aborigines, or Perry confronted the Shogun of Japan, there was never a meeting more incongruous than that between Gustave and Mrs. Jabish Roberts. The latter took in the former at a glance—his fat face, his sly eyes, his soiled white waistcoat and his oily hair.

"You Mist' Girdler's servant?" she

asked. At such a time Mrs. Roberts never used superfluous words.

Gustave bowed. He loathed this intruder at first sight.

"Furriner, ben't you?"

"I am Fer-rench," answered Gustave, as who should say, "*L'Etat c'est moi!*"

"Thought so, w'en I seen that there doorknob," observed Mrs. Roberts drily. "Guess you don't earn your pay, whatever 'tis. I'm Mis' Roberts—come t' redd up. Go take off that there vest an' put on a clean one. I can't abide dirt. I'll need you d'rectly."

She had disappeared, and was out of her cloth dress and into a print one before Gustave had found his bearings. He was bracing the inner man with a draught from the brandy decanter when she abruptly reappeared at the dining-room door.

"Thought's much," she said, eying him with extreme disfavor. "W're's the dusters?"

She attacked the apartment with her customary vigor, covering the bookshelves with newspapers, hanging rugs and mattresses out of every window and piling ornaments in compact but orderly groups on the beds and divans, and covering them with sheets, at every step unearthing some new evidence of Gustave's criminal negligence.

"Guess you ain't wore out any dusters sence you ben here," she observed presently. "There ain't no sign o' them cushions hevin' ben beat sence Noah druv in the an'mals, two b' two."

"I dus' ever' day, ever'w're," retorted Gustave superbly.

Mrs. Roberts paused deliberately and stared at him through her spectacles.

"Well!" she said, "'twouldn't do *you* no harm t' learn th' eleventh verse o' the hundred an' sixteenth Sam by heart!"

Gustave airily seated himself at the piano.

"I'm ze boss here," he observed, with a gesture of disdain, "w'en Mees-taire Gairdler's gone," and immediately gave a brilliant, if strikingly in-

correct, performance of the "Marseillaise." Entranced, he repeated it, and, enraptured, repeated it again. Suddenly Mrs. Jabish Roberts seized him by his pulpy shoulders and shook him vigorously.

"Ef y' ain't got nothin' better t' do," she exclaimed, "'n t' set an' *deejen* folks, go on out w'ere y' b'long!"

Petrified, he went, annexing the brandy decanter as he passed, and Mrs. Roberts fell to work again.

"Shif'less numskull!" she said, pounding a cushion viciously. "Ef I hed the runnin' of him I'd warm his pants f'r him quick enough!"

Three hours produced a vast change in the appearance of Stephen Girdler's library. There was a sweetish smell of soapsuds and warm water in the air, the window-panes glistened, the green upholstery looked as fresh as foliage after a summer rain, and now Mrs. Roberts was on her knees before the book-shelves, dusting each volume with a soft cloth and replacing it with an eye to proper alignment. She had not called on Gustave for assistance. That gentleman had retired to the seclusion of his bedroom, and was there communing with the decanter. He came forth at noon, to meet his friend, the grocer, at the back door.

In Gustave, as well as in the apartment, three hours had produced a change. The brandy decanter was half empty now, and his sense of importance aggravated to the point of recklessness. On a sudden Mrs. Roberts heard his voice behind her:

"Ziss my fr'en', ze gro-caire!"

She cast a glance over her shoulder. Gustave was balancing himself in the doorway, with one hand on the portières. The grocer stood beside him. Both men wore their hats. Both were leering.

Mrs. Roberts hurriedly assembled her ideas. The mop she had been using stood within reach, in a brown pail of thick suds.

"I don't make up t' grocers, ner anythin' o' th' sort," she replied scornfully.

"Doan' be ker-oss, mother!" exhorted Gustave.

Mother! Mrs. Jabish Roberts rose and seized her weapon. In some such fashion as that wherein Brian de Bois-Guilbert was wont to couch his lance she laid her mop in rest. Then she drove straight at Gustave's maudlin smile, and struck her mark full, fair and square!

The effect was stupendous. Blowing foam like a wounded whale, the discomfited *chef* capsized, went under, and, disdaining protest or resistance, made rapidly, on hands and knees, for the pantry door. The grocer, never a man of large initiative, perceived nothing in the way of suggestion save that of example. This he wisely followed. A moment later Mrs. Roberts was alone in the library—five minutes later alone in the apartment. Between them the two in the kitchen had finished the decanter, and then, Yankee and Gaul alike being thus fortified with Dutch courage, they sallied forth together. Gustave rode in the grocery wagon as far as the billiard saloon, wherein, with immense satisfaction and no little hilarity, he passed the remainder of the day.

When Mrs. Roberts discovered this defection she rejoiced rather than repined. To herself she qualified it as the best kind of riddance to the worst kind of rubbish, and forthwith she extended the field of her activities to include the kitchen, the pantry, the larder, and even Gustave's private sleeping apartment. She was a brave woman, with both the will and the strength for vigorous and continual warfare against the twin demons of dirt and disorder; but even she went limp before what was thus revealed.

"No power on airth," she declared, when breath returned to her, "not even Mis' Vail"—and this was saying volumes—"would a-make me tetch them there messes!"

Before she had fully realized her intention, she was out of her print dress again and into her cloth one,

and was making her preparations for departure. For the first time in her life she was beating a retreat.

She was tying her bonnet strings when the telephone bell rang sharply, and, instinctively systematic even at the height of her rage and indignation, she went to the study in answer to the call. For some moments the mumbling of the person at the other end was wholly unintelligible. The first clear word was "Mother!"

"Oh, it's you, is it, you vagabone?" exclaimed Mrs. Roberts. "W'at in lan' do y' want?"

Presently it was made imperfectly clear that Gustave proposed to bring two friends—cousins, he was careful to explain—back to dinner. The announcement, unnecessarily elaborate in form, was punctuated by an occasional "hic" which was in no degree due to the mechanism of the telephone.

"Well, you'll not, then!" retorted Mrs. Roberts emphatically. "You'll not bring a livin' soul here w'ile y'r master's gone—not ef *I* know et! Mother, indeed! I'll mother you, y' lump o' good-f'r-naught!"

"Wash-ash?" inquired Gustave genially.

Mrs. Roberts rang off. Then, as she would have expressed it, she felt herself growing cold all over. To what did she stand pledged if not to mount guard over Mr. Girdler's property until his return? Lacking this, what guarantee was there that the "vagabone" would not complete the devastation he had so effectively begun? She began to perceive that, if only by her last words, she stood committed to a course of duty, and Duty, with Mrs. Jabish Roberts, began with a capital from the canon font of type.

"Ef 'tain't too exasp'ratin'!" she said aloud. And then her eyes fell on a photograph of Stephen Girdler.

He was rather good-looking, was Stephen Girdler, though he himself would have been the last person to think so. His face had an expression of singular and winning gentleness,

together with a disarming and appealing suggestion of innocence and helplessness. His large, mild eyes showed one immediately that he was born to be imposed upon. One was impelled to take him under wing, to shield him, to soothe him with, "There—there—there!" or some kindred expression of reassurance. What was more, he bore a certain rather close resemblance to the late moderately lamented Jabish Roberts.

"So that's him," reflected the widow. "I knowed et like a flash, f'om his likeness t' Mis' Vail. Likely lookin' feller, an' I'll warr'nt ez innercént ez a babe unborn. Like's not he ain't hed no idee o' w'at's ben a-goin' on, right under his poor nose. Well, *I* ain't a-goin' t' see him d'frauded. I'll just *set* tell he gits back!"

And "set" she did. Gustave, maudlinly eloquent, returned at midnight and was summarily refused admission. Gustave, sobered and inclined to repentance, reappeared at noon the following day, and, for sole satisfaction, had his limited wardrobe handed out through the back door, piece by piece, with the library tongs. Gustave, in a state of progressive contrition and bewilderment, came back at intervals during the ensuing forty-eight hours and was met by one invariable stereotyped reply:

"Y' don't set foot ento this here flat tell Mist' Girdler gits back—ef y' do *then*!"

On the fourth day the object of Mrs. Roberts's unpremeditated loyalty returned. He let himself in with a latch-key, left his hat and valise on a chair which he barely noted and immediately forgot, and went directly to his study, where he plunged at once into the fourth column of Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy," for which he had been longing, with something like an opium-eater's craving, ever since his train had left New York. As was to be expected, he knew no more till dinner-time.

That moment, however, with Mrs. Roberts at the study door, in her trim print dress, was one of those rare ones when Stephen Girdler touched earth.

"Er—where is Gustave?" he inquired.

"I've sent him a-packin' about his business," announced Mrs. Roberts coolly. "A lazy, drunken, shif'less feller, that's w'at *he* was, Mist' Girdler. W'en I seen w'at he'd done to your apartment I'd a-like t' hev slapped his stomach, that I would. Now, I'm Mis' Roberts, an' I'm a-minded t' stop right here an' see t' y'. Ef y' got any questions t' ast about me y' can ast them o' Mis' Vail, an' I guess w'at she'll hev t' say'll satisfy y'. I've got a temp'ry cook, an' I'll wait at table tell I've learned her how. Y'r dinner's ready."

It was a full fortnight before she addressed him again.

"Y'd do better t' put that there readin' one side an' eat y'r steak w'ile et's hot. Y'll hev t' excuse my speakin' out in meetin', Mist' Girdler, but I can't abide t' see good food give the go-by."

This was a stupendous step in advance, but Stephen Girdler looked up with an odd and unaccustomed little smile. In the two weeks just gone he had, contrary to his usage, been noticing many things—the scrupulous order

and cleanliness of his surroundings, the excellent and unusual homely flavor of his food, the trim, decisive presence of this *dea ex machina*, whose very name, more often than not, would slip his memory. Now, as he looked at her, he was suddenly impressed with her extreme gentility and smitten with a sense of shame that this quiet, capable and ladylike person should be performing a menial service for him.

"Er—couldn't you let the girl do the serving?" he inquired gently. "I don't like—that is, it seems as if you should take your place at table as well as I."

Mrs. Roberts surveyed him approvingly. At the moment his resemblance to the late Jabish was more than ordinarily striking. She had never violently cared for Jabish, but she had had a deal of comfort out of "doin' f'r him," as she said. In this sense she missed him acutely. And the house at Salem was lonely. And she was getting on. And—well—perhaps—

"Well, no doubt I'll set in with y'," she replied, with the faintest hint of a blush, "w'en I git things runnin' t' rights."

The which, as Mrs. Jabish Roberts more than half suspected, was prophecy!



PAST COUNTING

COLONEL BLOOD—When I was in your city I counted twenty saloons in one block.

NEW YORKER—I suppose you lost consciousness after that.



FLEETING FAME

BRIGGS—There goes Bender, author of one of the best selling novels of the week.

GRIGGS—I don't remember him.

"Well, you know it was last week."

A QUEST

WHAT ways through the wide world, east or west,
 Shall I follow, dear, to find you?
 Perhaps by some road I know the best
 I should fare and—not far behind you—
 Perhaps by the changing tracks that cross
 Where the suns and the storms are beating,
 'Mid the lonely reaches where swift waves toss,
 I might seek for the place of meeting!

Ah, whatever the road, or south, or north,
 Through chill of snow, or the glowing
 Of passion-roses, I journey forth
 Far, far as the winds are blowing!
 Oh, heart of my heart; when I reach you, when
 The arms of my longing bind you,
 It may be that then, and only then,
 I shall know I can never find you.

MADELINE BRIDGES.



AN INCONVENIENCE

BIBBS—A man who becomes rich can pick his friends.

GIBBS—Yes, but there are drawbacks. He can't choose his poor relations.



QUITE TRUE

SHE—You silly boy! Why waste your love on a girl you can't get?

HE—Well, it's better than wasting it on some that I can get.



NOT HER FIRST AFFAIR

MR. ARDENT—Aren't you glad that I am going to marry your sister, Bobby?

BOBBY—I'm glad you think you are.

CANDOR AND COURTESY

By Agnes Repplier

THERE are certain virtues which seem to have an insuperable objection to living peacefully and quietly—as virtues ought to live—in one another's company. Turgenieff has told us the story of Jove's great banquet, at which there were no guests save virtues—all feminine—and how, upon this august occasion, two radiant creatures, Benevolence and Gratitude, met for the first time. But there are others—old and intimate acquaintances—who will not work harmoniously together, and of these Candor and Courtesy are conspicuous for their disagreements. The efforts made to reconcile them have been, on the whole, less determined than the bickerings of their allies. It has been assumed that incompatibility of temper must forever debar these admirable qualities from joining hands to perfect a human soul.

All the best arguments are marshaled on the side of Candor, and we dilate with our finest emotions at her name. The word truth, like the word liberty, is held too sacred for analysis. It is the sublime centre around which revolve sentiments of rare nobility applicable to the pulpit, the platform and the stage. Only the still, small voice of experience whispers an occasional warning in behalf of Courtesy, who, like many another unobtrusive virtue, gets little credit for the helpful part she plays. Yet it has been well said that the difference between habitual rudeness and habitual politeness in a man's behavior is probably as great a difference as he will ever be able to make in the sum of human happiness. And the arithmetic of life consists in

adding to or subtracting from the pleasurable moments of mortality. Neither is it worth while to draw fine distinctions between pleasure and happiness. If we are indifferent to the pleasures of our fellow-creatures it will not take us long to be indifferent to their happiness as well. We do not grow generous by ceasing to be considerate.

The mysterious connection which has been established between rudeness and probity on the one hand, and between politeness and insincerity on the other, must be held responsible for much that is disagreeable in our daily intercourse with our neighbors. It is a perfectly illogical connection, based upon a narrow knowledge of human nature; but it is not to be driven from men's minds.

So rugged was he that we thought him just,
So churlish was he that we deemed him true.

There are times, doubtless, when candor goes straight to its goal and politeness misses the mark. Mr. John Stuart Mill was once asked upon the hustings whether he had ever said that the English working classes were generally liars. He answered shortly: "I did"; and the unexpected reply was greeted with loud applause. He was wont to quote this incident as proof of the value set by Englishmen upon plain speaking. They do value it, and they value still more the courage which defies their bullying. And then the remark was, after all, a generalization. We can bear tolerably well, *en masse*, the hearing of our faults, because everybody believes that the cap fits his neighbor's head.

Yet there is something discouraging about the prefix "plain." It does not

carry with it assurances of pleasing. A plain dinner, a plain duty, a plain woman, a plain child—all are very good in their way, but all are very far from beguiling. A plain truth is sure to be a disagreeable truth, and it is almost sure to be disagreeably spoken. For there is much unkindness in the world which finds expression in speech; and even when no active animosity, no latent cruelty wings the unwelcome word we feel the absence of good will. The plain-speaker may not be unfriendly, but neither is he our friend. The best that has been said of him is that he is a Laodicean, unconcerned either with our pleasure or our pain.

M. Rondalet, in "*La Réforme Sociale*," says with admirable perspicuity that the amenities of life stand for its moral responsibilities and translate them into action. They express externally the fundamental relations which ought to exist between men. "All the distinctions belonging to good breeding, so delicate and sometimes so complicated, answer to a profound unconscious analysis of the duties we owe to one another."

This is worth careful consideration. "Manners makyth Man" is the motto of New College, Oxford, and its founder devoutly believed that there is a close and intimate connection between our outward demeanor and our inward grace. Politeness may not necessarily imply unselfishness, but it often expresses it, and it is always so good a discipline that its exercise cuts short our chances to be selfish in the trivial things of life. The perpetual surrender which politeness exacts must reduce the sum total of our selfishness. To listen when we want to talk, to talk when we want to be silent, to stand when we want to sit down, to accept the companionship of a stupid acquaintance when we might, at the expense of politeness, escape, to regard with smiling composure the near presence of small children—all these things, and many like them, brace the sinews of our souls. They are not easy. It is not even easy to temper our speech to the shorn lamb who listens to us; to

say what we think will give pleasure rather than strike that sharp note of individualism which seldom stops short of brutality. People "desperately in earnest," we are told, cannot pause to be polite; but "desperate" is a disagreeable adjective to put before earnestness. It weakens rather than augments its power. "The cultivated and reasoned attitude which we call courtesy" carries weight with thoughtful people. It means that we control our own forces, that we have been drilled in the priceless discipline of civilization.

There are people who balk at the commonplaces of daily intercourse because they are manifestly insincere: those expressions of unfelt pleasure or regret with which we accept or decline invitations, those compliments, those regards, those small, affectionate phrases which begin and end our letters, those agreeable formalities which have accumulated around the simplest actions of life. The Quakers, as we know, made a mighty stand against verbal insincerities, with one striking exception—the use of the word "Friend." They claimed, indeed, that this word represented their attitude toward humanity, their spirit of universal tolerance and brotherhood; but to address another man as "Friend" is to imply that *he* regards *you* in this affectionate light, which he may be far from doing. When a preacher or an orator says "My friends" he uses the word in a very Pickwickian sense. It is best not to analyze too closely the polite phrases which facilitate intercourse and contribute to the amenity of life. They mean next to nothing, but if we abandoned them all tomorrow we should not be one step nearer the vital things of truth.

For to be sincere with ourselves is much better and much harder than to be painstakingly accurate with our neighbors. Self-deception is too subtle to be recognized and too pleasant to be forsaken. We know when we have lied to others, but we don't know, and we don't want to know, when we have lied to ourselves.

When Bishop Butler wrote his famous sentence, "Things and actions are as they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be," he did not add, "Why should we desire to deceive?" but "Why should we desire to be deceived?" A man may be cruelly candid to his friends, and a cowardly hypocrite to himself. He may handle his neighbor harshly, and himself with velvet gloves. He may never have told the fragment of a lie in all his life, and never have thought the truth. He may hurt the pride and wound the feelings of all who come into contact with him, and never give his own soul the benefit of one good knock-down blow.

Plain-speaking is endurable only when it is immaculately free from censoriousness. We all know people who seem to think aloud, so crystal clear is their speech, so limpidly and transparently truthful. We all know people who have in their natures a recognizable element of brutality, a strain of kinship with primeval man

who domineered impolitely over his antediluvian household. Yet though these plain-speakers blunder strangely in cutting their clean way through the labyrinth of words, their blunders are easily and often affectionately forgiven, because fault-finding is as foreign to them as pretense. Their attitude is not judicial. Their outspoken speech expresses and implies no censure. And then we hardly need to be told that "frequent lapses add a pathetic charm to contrasting excellence, and it is often the nature that can be brutal whose gentleness is so exquisite." What is difficult to endure is the deliberate utterance of truths, unasked and unwelcome; truths which are not noble in themselves, and which are not nobly spoken, which may be trusted to offend, and which nobody expects to illuminate. It is not for this that we have perfected through centuries the priceless gift of language; it is not for this that we meet one another in the charming intercourse of life.



PARADOXICAL

DDASHAWAY—How was that seaside hotel?

CLEVERTON—Rank—only one bright spot in it.

"And that?"

"The dark spot on the back piazza."



WELL WORTH THE OUTLAY

ALICE—Mrs. Suddenrich doesn't think that the money spent in educating their daughter was wasted.

ISABEL—Of course not. Anyone can see that Mrs. Suddenrich's manners are greatly improved.

THE ENDLESS SPRING

THERE comes a whisper through my heart
 As night o'ertakes me on my way
 Where I would hold my cares apart
 And mourn the silent autumn day;
 The paths I love await the snows,
 The boughs are bare of flit of wing,
 Yet through my heart the whisper goes
 That somewhere—somewhere, there is spring.

I care not whether near or far—
 Through other lands and climes it goes
 With drift of blossom, glint of star
 And old-time message of the rose;
 I cannot ask that it should stay
 If hearts afar lack comforting;
 Enough for me to know alway
 That somewhere—somewhere, there is spring.

Belovèd—ah, where'er you be
 For whom my thoughts like thrushes sing,
 You, too, perchance will whisper me
 That somewhere—somewhere there is spring?

THOMAS WALSH.



WELL-FOUNDED FEAR

SHE—Let you kiss me! Why, I've known you only two days.
 HE—True, but I was afraid you wouldn't allow it if you knew me better.



HIS MODERN EDUCATION

“HASN'T Gayboy been mixed up in several divorce suits?”
 “Yes; he's a graduate of a co-respondents' school.”

WHEN DELOS DRIFTED

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

I FELT aggrieved when Imbrie married. Not, certainly, because he had forsaken the ranks of the bachelors where he and I had shouldered it together for some years, but because it made such a difference. And then, too, there was something in the way it was done that hurt us all, and of course especially me. For, like Mrs. Gummidge, I was disposed to consider, and the others seemed to yield it me as my rightful privilege, that I should "feel it more than most."

The very office had an altered look when I came into it, rather later than usual, at about eight o'clock that nasty November night. Nash and Dominick and Myers were at their places, but they had an unusual appearance, as if the President had been assassinated or somebody's salary had been raised. Loew, the night editor, had not come in yet, and his desk, like the hub in our wheel of desks, was lightly littered with copy waiting for his malignant pencil.

Von Briesen, whose desk was next to mine on the left, crossed the room as I came in and fell into his seat.

"Hello, Barclay!" he said; "you've heard the news?"

They were so evidently bursting with it that a childish resentment of their advantage filled me. And yet, of course, I hadn't heard, and Dominick, looking up and keeping a heavy finger stolidly upon the place where he had broken off in his editing, gave me a keen, comprehensive look which took in my ignorance.

Dominick, we used to say, was inert from the nose down, but from that

point up there wasn't a quicker or a sharper man on the staff.

"Hasn't heard a thing," said Dominick, and went back to his suspended corrections.

"No, I haven't heard any news," said I, without much interest. "Has anyone, ever, in this office?"

Myers grunted: "We have, tonight."

"Well?" I queried somewhat wearily. There was, after all, I thought, no need to lead up so dramatically to their disclosure. "Will it do for a scoop?"

There was a pause as I stood, one foot on my chair, turning down my trousers. Somehow they all looked at Dominick as if silently electing him their spokesman. He felt it apparently, for he looked up, keeping the finger again at its place. His sharp eyes glowed with something almost like excitement.

"Imbrie is married!" he said.

I think I must have remained motionless, staring for some moments, and then my impression is that I sat slowly and deliberately into my chair. I saw my hand reach for a page of copy from Loew's desk, and knew, although I didn't read a word, that I was looking at it quietly. I knew, too, that the eyes of the circle were watching me, wondering, for Imbrie and I had been as David and Jonathan for fifteen years.

"He might have told us, I think," I said.

After that and for the many days of silence I nursed my wound quite tenderly. Imbrie had not only married but he had resigned, and to all appear-

ances it cost him no single pang to drop out of our ken and condition. We missed him, but there came no sign from him that he missed us. I think among themselves my fellow-desk editors discussed the matter, wondering undoubtedly who the woman was, but they never spoke of it to me. I was hurt, sorely and deeply, but I went about my ways and asked for no news of him.

Imbrie had been a curiously potent influence in my life; indeed, I often thought, in the lives of us all. There was a tremendous power in his gentleness, and his amazing purity was full of vigorous appeal. He was an impossible man to describe, for to give an idea of just how complete was his cleanliness and innocence is to risk drawing the man a prude and a poser. And yet how far was Imbrie from these things! I have seen him kill many a spicy story simply by coming quietly into the room. He would catch Myers so often coughing in his attempt to let his voice grow beautifully less that I think Imbrie was quite worried in his great-hearted way about the man.

Imbrie was good. Good he was in a nice, natural way, taking it for granted that everybody else was as fine as he; not, as is the manner of some good men, that they were all in need of his help and example and advice. And there wasn't a man in the offices who did not love him and wish him well and respect him with a depth that knew no fathoming.

He had gone so completely and so silently that it was quite like having heard that he was dead, and I came to look upon the separation as so nearly that that the reality interested me but little.

When I did think of it it was to grow a little bitter and to ponder somewhat disapprovingly upon the influence of woman.

My grievance had grown so far with me after a time that I had fairly begun to cherish it, when it was gently and quietly taken from me—oh, about two months after his marriage—by a letter from Imbrie asking me out for

the week-end. I was disposed at first to regard the letter coldly and in an unforgiving spirit, but it was an impossible attitude to maintain. The very look of his quaint pennings, that I had seen so often by the tail of my right eye, in our shoulder to shoulder work, appealed with an irresistible familiarity. The page fairly smiled at me, and through its medium I could see the good old face of Imbrie and could hear him say, "Come, don't be stuffy." After all, I found myself arguing with myself, as if a man were to push his own head under water—why shouldn't a fellow have his honeymoon in peace?

So I packed up and started on the heels of my telegram. It was cold—cold of the kind that fairly snaps in the still snow. And the train was of that uncomfortable warmth that produces a comatose stupidity of mind. But for me I was just beginning to feel the stimulus of the situation.

Imbrie wasn't dead in any sense of the word, and I was on my way across frozen Westchester to see him. He was married, that was all, and consequently I was on my way to see the new wife as well.

And here an engulfing curiosity received my spirit. Mrs. Imbrie—what, who and why was she? I had never heard him speak of a woman with any other emotion than his invariable impersonal reverence, and most of us had come to accept him as a man sufficient unto himself. Where had he met her? What was she like? How little or much did she understand and appreciate him? How much had she changed in him? That was the most my curiosity could do for me, however—to embark me upon a sea of fruitless speculation. I should know at least some of these things as soon and no sooner than was materially possible.

Dear Imbrie! He was waiting for me at the bare little station, one hand on the reins of his bell-jingling horse and the other stretched out in a characteristic gesture of generous welcome. I climbed into the thicket of robes in the sleigh at his side, almost stunned

by the sudden blow of the cold, and in another moment we were lightly and musically slipping across the white distance to his home.

Imbrie was talkative, not nervously, but with a certain serene ease which was so lavish as to suggest, to my skeptical eye, artificiality. I found myself quite inanely trying to analyze his inflections, pauses and merriness, as if I had put him into a retort, and expected to find in the result just what ingredients went to his making. Of course, being a simple, ordinary man, with no power of extracting gold from sea-water, I gathered nothing of any value from his flow of words—that is, nothing that gave any relief to my curiosity. He spoke once only of his wife, saying that she had complained all day of a nervous headache—the wind affected her always in this way—and that he was not at all certain she would appear that evening. It gave me a curious dual sense of relief and disappointment, the latter because of my natural interest to see her, and the former for a variety of reasons, such as my inborn reluctance to meeting strangers, and the acknowledged homesickness for an evening alone with Imbrie as of old. I think on the whole the curiosity fairly outweighed the other feeling, and that I was glad with an unmixed gladness when, as Imbrie left me at the gate, telling me cheerily to “go right in,” and that he would follow as soon as he had “taken the horse around,” I saw her standing in the open doorway as I went up the crunching path of snow.

There was something—as I look back on it now I realize—something really magnificent in the way she pretended not to know me. Of course she was ready. She had known I was coming—and did that, I wondered, account for the possible absence prepared for by the nervous headache? And yet I admired her as she did it, with such a grace, with such an effortless grace. There came to my mind the many times, in playing chess, that I had, at the last moment of choosing a move, done that one thing which I had de-

cided at the outset was certain death, and I gave her the unspoken tribute to a superior poise when I saw that she had settled upon her policy, and even in the last nervous seconds had carried it calmly through.

Imbrie was upon us almost immediately, and we went into the darkening library for warming tea and friendliness. Oddly enough, although it was he who was of such supreme importance, he seemed to take unending interest in my affairs and those of Loew, and Dominick, and Myers, and all the rest of us, and I found myself answering instead of asking questions.

Mrs. Imbrie had served me with tea and lighted the lamp, and Imbrie had stirred the fire and flung down a new log upon it, and I was still unable, without the assistance of his queries, to carry any sentence to its logical and necessary end. If she noticed how completely I had given way to the inundation of amazement on seeing her, she gave no sign. Imbrie gave no sign. When he came back to his chair next mine after mending the fire she gave him his own cup, which she had been patiently holding, and as their hands touched their eyes went to one another with a look of indescribable devotion. I felt so suddenly thrown off, so outside the orbit of their glorious day, that I repressed with difficulty a rudimentary desire to go away and leave them to themselves. How kindly Imbrie brought me back to them again!

When tea-time passed and dressing-time separated us I was relieved, as of a shortness of breath, to be alone again. I wanted to think—there was no denying it, and yet what in the world did I want to think about? What was to profit me a debate within myself as to whether or not Imbrie knew what I knew—almost any man but Imbrie would have known—whether she had told him or no, whether before or after his declaration of dependence, whether, whether, whether! Why should I want to know these things, and yet how could

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I help wanting to know them? Indeed, my yielding to the allurements of these wonderments nearly cost me the disgrace of being late to dinner, and I came hurrying down just as Imbrie was mouthing for his second hello.

Mrs. Imbrie did not take wine with us. And yet that in itself was admirably in harmony with the rest. She was simply, beautifully lovely in her snowy fichu and soft gray gown—almost puritanic. And yet she escaped, by the force of just that frank simplicity, making too grotesque the contrast in her apostasy.

I had come down in considerable distress of mind, fearing that I was about hopelessly to repeat my heaviness and gaucherie of the twilight hours; but whether because of her own inspiring bravery or our combined love for Imbrie, we rose to him, she and I, and went with him through the dinner-space in equal triumph.

Yes, for we did combine our love for him. It was, alas! the only bond that held us close. It came down just precisely to that, I could see, and all the perplexities and complications of the new order were to be put to this one test for their solution. In itself it created a new item of mystery, for whether she made the effort to save him from knowing, or to help him in bearing an accepted cross, was what I could not of course discover.

She was not brilliant, by any means. She could not at times at all hold her place with Imbrie in his forked-lightning conversation. But she had an abounding charm, and she listened artfully. She was indeed so quietly delightful that I caught myself on the verge of giving place to an insane doubt of her identity. Was she, after all, the same woman? Might it not be just one of those miraculous fabled resemblances? I took her in as she sat at the end of the table opposite to Imbrie, with her white, fine hand with its one ring—one ring! upon the white, fine cloth, her hair catching so girlishly at the flickering light, and her candid eyes upon his face. The idea

of my possible mistake grew fast upon me, and my heart warmed with the feast and the pretty hope that leaped in one. It was the mature form of the childish "Let's pretend" that covers all deficiencies and removes all unpleasant impossibilities. At one light, easy gesture it swept away the wretched sickness of my soul and left me heart-light and happy. Of course it was a mere resemblance.

Imbrie couldn't, simply couldn't have married as I feared. His love for what was pure in man, woman and world would have opened his eyes to that which was unworthy. His sensitiveness would have made it impossible for this flagrancy to pass undetected, for his sensitiveness was greater even than his innocence.

And so in the spell of the glorified hour I put it all from me.

Imbrie sat, long-legged and extended beside the table, puffing rings of smoke into the genial air between sips of golden cordial, and his delicious voice was mellow with his happiness. At least I think it was his happiness, but it might quite readily have been my own. Mrs. Imbrie did not leave us when smoking-time came. In fact, she rather persistently stayed, as if, somehow, skilfully she kept herself between us. I did not think of this at the time. But I did remember it afterward, that since she had met me at the door Imbrie and I had not been left alone one moment.

It was an evening that will go always with me in my memory for dear things. We stayed at the table until long after midnight. Mrs. Imbrie glowed radiantly through the misty room, like some refulgent personification of bridal happiness. I could scarcely take my eyes from her strange, from her familiar face. And it seemed sometimes that she was studying mine—though that may have been fancy.

I have said that I put it all from me. I did, in the pitifully lightsome way we have when the exhilaration of the evening hours is fairly swimming in our veins. It is not always wine. The black sky, the look of tall trees

patient in the darkness, the mysterious touch of the eastern midnight breeze, the sense of going with the earth to meet the largely dawning sun—these things have lifted me as easily into that realm of aloofness where one is so divorced from the lesser day. But on this night it was the wine, wine of my glass and wine of Imbrie's presence, and all my burdens fell from me.

When I woke in the morning I knew quite before I was awake that I had returned to the inferior hours of breakfasting and plain, prosaic day. I deliberately sought to evade it. But the vague sleepy sense of something disagreeable to be faced, some horrid problem that refused to be set aside unsolved, grew in its strength to a very weary-hearted and alert comprehension of what the day was promising.

The cold of my bath added resentment to the irritation. Why in the name of all that was prophetic had I come? Why should I have placed myself in this abominable predicament? Why wasn't I at my own homely little quarters, grieving at Imbrie's silence and unaware of all its unthinkable advantages?

By the time I was ready to go down to breakfast I was in so bad a temper that I had positively to sit down in my bedroom and reason myself into a presentable frame of mind. I finally went out upon the snow-covered balcony that embraced my windows, and let the bitter morning eat its way into my mood. I went down then tingling with the cold and more possessed of my usual philosophic evenness of mind.

Mrs. Imbrie came down directly after me. She was absolutely haggard, and the look of her went to my very heart in hateful confirmation of my suspicions. The easy explanation of a mere resemblance which had seemed so plausible the night before took on the color of a ludicrous insanity in these unlighted hours. She had not slept. It was written all over her. And the reason for her wakefulness—her anxious wakefulness her

face declared—came to me as promptly as if she herself had frankly told me. She had been wondering if I were going to tell.

The issue between us two assumed such proportions, at least in my own eyes, that even Imbrie became dwarfed by it and accounted for naught when he joined us at the table. Just what we had been saying, just what we then said, I have not the slightest notion. It did not seem the same room, the same table, the same trio of the night before. Stripped of all the lures of candle-light and watching spirits that walk only at dusk, the very atmosphere was void and comfortless.

There began for me the most unbearable hours I think, I hope, I shall ever have to live. Every slow minute was full of misery, miseries that fairly twisted in their effort to inflict a greater pain. Do what I could, turn where I might, avoid it as I vainly tried to do, the unbanishable conviction haunted me with a grisly insistence. I thought that Imbrie ought to know.

The morning hours, as I looked forward to them, bid fair to be impossibly dreadful. The leisure of a Sunday morning is bound to be distinctly charming or distinctly irksome—at least I have ever so found it. But in this particular situation I dreaded it. What in the world were we going to do with ourselves?

Imbrie was the only salvation. Happy, radiant and full of the brisk impulse of the air, he suggested a walk toward the Hudson. I assented gratefully. And then my eyes flew to Mrs. Imbrie. Yes, there was the dreadful line across her brows again.

"What will you do with yourself, honey, while we are gone?" said Imbrie, and all the torture of the woman's heart was laid before his blind and smiling eyes as she answered with a bitter truthfulness: "I do not know, I do not know."

In a little more we were out, Imbrie and I, forging against the whipping wind across the thick soft snow. I tried to drink in his mood, but could

not. Under cover of his buoyancy I kept repeating to myself: "Why should you have come? Why should you have come?" Would Imbrie hate me ever after? Or would he hate me more if at some later day he had to bear a pain I could so much more gently deal him?

I watched the strong, clear color in his icy cheeks, and wondered what he was saying. We walked across the snow, side by side and miles between us. I could put out my hand and touch him. Would it ever be so again? And then a passionate rebellion seethed in my aching heart. I had loved Imbrie many years; we had been Jonathan and David, and I would have laid my two hands on the block rather than do him injury. Why, in God's name, must it be I who, thrust into his presence, should precipitate this horror?

When the ice-founded Hudson lay suddenly a sparkling cruel thing far, far below us I had a dim suicidal wish that somehow it might intervene in my behalf. Behind me, across the spotless fields, in the house that we had left, I could see the woman walking to and fro, I could trace the line of anguish growing deeper on her forehead, I could count the fierce eternities that tortured her.

My absence of spirit passed for the silence of the wonder-struck with Imbrie, himself quite still. It was only long after, in retrospect, that I saw the marvel of that cold, bright sky, of the glittering walls of the fortress shore across the harmful water.

Then Imbrie turned, blustering with the cold, and swung me toward the home again. We both were silent, walking rather faster than was conducive to desultory talk. What Imbrie was thinking of—perhaps he knew; my mind was with the stricken woman we were going back to. She might have known! She might have known!

And yet she did not. For the question of her white, still face met me just past the door, met me, and fled to his own face and read his eyes. He was so boyish in his gladness to be with her again, and at his first exuberance the

waiting color rushed into her cheeks so violently that I feared for her. But as I followed them into a farther room she turned a little on his arm and looked at me. We both knew, then, knew with a sharp increasing of our pain, both that I would not tell—and that she must.

The day that was passing seemed to last for weeks. I could not look at Imbrie but that my heart grew big with womanish weakness. I could not look at her but that I cursed myself for being there at all. It seemed so all my fault. Suppose I had not come—Imbrie and she would have gone on, perhaps for all the rest of life, in their paradise. There came to me a line of old philosophy—what you don't know doesn't hurt you. I think my nurse said it sometimes to me when I was little, and I had always thought it rather silly. I understood it better now.

There was a craving in me to be happy, to have them happy, miraculously to eliminate all the slow foundation of these hideous walls that bid fair to imprison us from the light of day forever. I sat huddled over the fire in what was called the library—as if the whole house were not that! Vague chasms like sleepy jaws yawned and mouthed in the blaze. The subtle hypnotism of the glowing light penetrated to my inmost misery and robbed it of reason. Why should we all be so unhappy? They loved. The world was a fair place. Why should dead days rise in their ghostly trappings to haunt the sweet reality of now?

And so it was, engrossed as I was, that I scarcely knew when Imbrie, hours after, came in and sat beside me, until he said, with his old whimsical way rather buried beneath an eruption from his inmost heart: "I've got to talk about her. May I?"

I moved a little, and laid a hand upon his arm. "Will you?" I said.

He drew a long, hard breath and flung himself back in his chair. I could not see his face as I sat, and his voice came almost impersonally to my

ears. I listened, and I watched the fire.

"In the first place she is so wonderful," said Imbrie's voice, "so full of inconceivable depths and boundless immensities. Men call it masculine; angels, I dare say, call it angelic. It is a quality that women rarely know, a kind of omniscience. It is quite impossible to believe in a time when she was not—do you know what I mean? If she walked slowly through the ages, lived through the varying empires of greatness, she could not be more wise, more quick to understand.

"Of course she has, in her days, suffered. A soul like hers is bound to suffer. It gives itself so vitally into the every moment of its life that weariness and wakefulness and pain are sure to follow. The ignorances and wickedness, as the prayer has it, of a heart like hers must do her infinite hurt, and yet for others, those who understand, they are immeasurably swallowed up in her eternities. I mean, she could almost kill without its taking hold of her reality. She could stand before a judgment of her peers, personally, intimately innocent—wondering how she came there, wondering why that one dark moment should overshadow her whole life. And yet she's so alive to wrong and suffering! She'd go without food to feed a hungry dog. A thin, weary horse in the street will bring her endless days of misery. She will talk of his patience, his willingness, his humbleness, his infinite superiority over the man who goads him on. She cannot bear to see a helpless thing in pain of any kind, mental, moral, physical, imaginary. A neglected garden will hurt her, sharply. She gives a quaint, fond individuality to every plant; she sees it struggling, neglected, lonely, dreaming wistfully of blossoms. She brings the tears into my eyes with her own sweet sympathies for things I never saw before in all my life. She has given me glimpses of her heart that have brought me nearer to the gentleness of Christ, love for the Magdalen, pity for the leper, and with it all she is so simple, such a little child—so un-

stained by the tears that she has had to shed, for of course she's had many things to grieve for. Haven't I? Haven't you?

"Somehow we calmly demand it of women that they go through life even as the lilies of the field, even with the wisdom of the great Immortal. We men can have our blunders, our regrets, our ugly things, and be forgiven, but a woman—no. I don't mean to infer that she stands in need of any forgiveness—not, certainly, from me. I suppose God will mete out His kindly compassion to her for her sins and errors, whatever they may be, but it is certainly not for human beings to judge her. The less we have to do with judging—eh?—the better.

"I haven't had anyone to talk to about her, and so I've rather felt bottled up until you came to listen. Isn't she beautiful? Isn't she wonderful? I wish to heaven I were an artist. What a joy it would be to re-create that face, the pure, straight brow, the deep blue eyes and the tender mouth. I'd like to paint her with the look she wears when she is grieving for some helpless thing, paint her with all the brooding yearning in her eyes and lips and call it 'Kindliness.' I never knew the meaning of the word until I saw her try to make a poor lost dog forget the months of cruelty he had endured. And when at last he crept, all shuddering, to her feet she looked like some rare angel bending down. We were in town a little while ago, just for a night or so, and, going through a dark side street, a woman passed us with some horrid words. I tried to get her away as quickly as I could, but do you know she bade me wait and turned back and spoke to the girl—for she was a girl in years. I couldn't—wouldn't have heard a word she said; but waited, as she asked me, and presently she came back with her arm around the poor creature, who was sobbing in a dreadful, unmasterable way. She's here now, working for my wife; waits on her like a slave, follows her like an animal.

"It's everywhere like that. Her day

is always marked with some sweet kindness. Her spirit surely has the gift of healing in its wings. Everyone she meets, everyone who needs her, is the better, happier and braver for knowing her. She's doing things for me you couldn't believe, pulling the weeds out of my soul's garden with gentleness. For—yes, she is even tender to the weeds, you know. She says she does not understand, but that of course they had no choice but to be weeds. She has an understanding patience that is positively godlike, and my reverence for her grows day by day. I think she is more nearly holy than any creature living. No—well, it isn't saying much. But she is holy, sacred to me, sacred to me—my wife."

His voice ceased for a moment, not as if he had finished, but as if the spell of his adoration held him speechless for a space. But he was not to continue. The maid came to the door quietly, but forever an interruption. Imbrie turned his head dreamily.

"A telegram, sir."

"It's for you," said Imbrie.

Taking it I read it heavily. "It's from the office. Von Briesen is ill; Loew wants me to return if possible."

"But no!" said Imbrie urgently.

"I think I really must," I said. "I'll come again, you know. The force is short, anyway. Loew wouldn't have sent unless he needed me."

"But you'll wait for dinner?"

"Oh, I must go now," I answered, moving toward the door to impress upon him my finality. "There'll be a train?"

"There's only one," said Imbrie, pulling out his watch. "We've just barely time to make it, if go you must. I never did like Loew."

I laughed a little, but had reached the door.

"I'll get the sleigh," said Imbrie, despondently aroused.

I packed my things up hastily and went again below stairs. Mrs. Imbrie had been waiting for me in the hallway. Her haggard eyes looked rather the heavier as if with tears, and they were heavy, too, with something from within. In some way she seemed quite silently to give me leave to speak. I went to her and took her hands.

"Don't tell him," said I brokenly.

She lifted up her eyes to me. "I have," she said.

I turned away. She led me to the door. "He thinks he has forgiven me," she said. "How can it be? Whenever he is silent shall I not scourge myself with doubts? Whenever I am sad will it not come to him anew? I cannot look tomorrow in the face."

"Could you forgive, if it were he?"

"My God, a million sins!"

"Are you so much the more compassionate?"

"No, no," she said.

The noise of bells came tinkling to our ears. We stepped out into the gathering dusk. Far off across the snow hills there was a band of royal crimson in the sky.

"There was an island," said I, "in an ancient sea, called Delos. It had no anchorage, but slipped about with every tide, drifting and wandering homelessly. But when Apollo had been born within its shore Delos became fixed, sheltering the glory of a god, and it was sacred evermore, filled with a deathless light."

She looked at me with fairly parted lips. "Oh, if I dared believe!" she said.

Imbrie halloed to me across the dim space. I started forward. "Believe," I said, "love will do much, and this man loves you."

I heard her voice whispering behind me as I hurried down to him: "There was an island in an ancient sea, called Delos. Ah, if I only dared believe!"



CUPID'S GOOD HUNTING

HE was stretched at his ease in the shade of a tree,
Beside him were piled his arrows and bow,
He was—well, décolleté to a shameful degree,
And the talk that ensued I have set forth below.

“Good morning, friend Daniel.” He nodded his thanks.
“I’ve a question—it’s lucky we met in this way:
When you’re after us mortals and up to your pranks,
What game, sir, is most satisfactory to slay?”

“Young girls or gray grannies, bent double with age?
For you needn’t deny you get after them, too;
The serf or the seigneur? The clown or the sage?
Adonis, or Croesus, or little Boy Blue?”

“Mere years do not matter,” he said. “Age or youth,
It’s all one to me, with the average steady;
But when I want sport—and I tell you the truth—
I hunt in the ranks of those married already.”

WARWICK JAMES PRICE.



A CERTAIN SIGN

DYER—I just saw the ambulance go by. I wonder what’s up?
DUELL—Scawcher must be out with his automobile.



MIGHT HAVE KNOWN THAT

FIRST OFFICE-BOY—Haven’t you anything to do?
SECOND OFFICE-BOY—Of course I have. If I didn’t have something to do
I wouldn’t be so busy not doing it.

THE BRAVE OLD WAY

I SAY risk all for one warm kiss;
 I say 'twere better risk the fall.
 Like Romeo, to venture all,
 And boldly climb to deadly bliss.
 I like that savage, Sabine way;
 What mighty minstrel's came of it!
 Their songs are ringing to this day,
 The bravest ever sung or writ.
 Their loves the love of Juliet,
 Of Portia, Desdemona, yea,
 The old true loves are living yet;
 And we, we love, we weep, we sigh
 In love with loves that will not die.

Then take her, lover, sword in hand,
 Hot-blooded and red-handed; clasp
 Her sudden, stormy, tall and grand,
 And lift her in your iron grasp
 And kiss her, kiss her till she cries
 From keen, sweet, happy, killing pain.
 Aye, kiss her till she seeming dies;
 Aye, kiss her till she dies, and then,
 Why, kiss her back to life again!

JOAQUIN MILLER.



THE FINAL TASK

MANAGER—Is that musical comedy of yours all ready?

PLAYWRIGHT—Yes; all that needs to be done is to have you remove the plot.



“JONES has spent a lot of time and money over his new country house,
 hasn't he?”
 “Yes; it fairly reeks with architecture.”

THE MASTIFF

By Willard French

TWO men, crossing Iowa Circle, in Washington, paused for a moment by the rose-granite base about the equestrian bronze of General Logan, their backs toward the bronze.

They walked with that deliberate mastery of mind over matter which peculiarly marks the real American statesman. One of them might have been a visiting governor or an ambassador home on a holiday. No one seemed to know him. The other everyone knew. He was the best known man in the country, the leading member of the Cabinet and unquestionably the next Chief Executive.

His hair was glistening white—not yellow-white or the fine floss-white of age, but crisp, curling, scintillating white. It made a marked setting for his perfect complexion, warm cheeks and quick, dark eyes, while it emphasized the poise of a head that was worthy of the broad shoulders and full chest. A strong, ungloved hand pointed as he said:

"That is the house, John—the small one, with the gable and high balcony. I never approach it without a shudder. I never turn away without a sigh. It was my Valley of Hinnom. That second-story room with the three windows saw me through a tragedy which wrenched me from the gate of hell."

"Then you must have been glad to get out of it and into the other," his friend remarked, his words wrapped in diplomatic velvet. "At present you have one of the finest homes in Washington. You will be sorry to leave that one even for eight years in the White House."

Unheeding, the other repeated: "I never look toward it without remorse or away without regret. I would rather go back there, John, and be nothing but the husband of my wife than to go to the White House."

"There is sarcasm in Destiny. When you were there perhaps you thought you would rather go to the White House than be the husband of any woman living," his friend replied, smiling, and was surprised by the other's prompt reply.

"I did," he said, and they walked on, up Rhode Island avenue, down Fourteenth street and out Massachusetts avenue, toward "one of the finest homes in Washington."

Presently the senator was saying: "You are wrong, John. A man's wife is not always everything or nothing to him. I do not refer to century-gold-beetles who catch butterflies. Their lexicon of domesticity is Greek to me. I mean real men and real wives. Sometimes, I suppose, a woman may become nothing to the man who loves her, through exaggerated notions of herself and a selfish determination as to precisely the kind of wife she proposes to be; but I think that the failures made of marriage are mostly due to men."

His friend smiled gravely and concurred. "Men are a bad lot when you take them out of common sense and let them loose in sentiment—Hyde or Jekyll, according to the way of the wind."

"No, no, not so bad as that," the other said. "No one ever went wider of the mark who still kept the mark in sight than did Louis Stevenson. No

living man, John, can be, interchangeably, Hyde and Jekyll, *facile princeps* and *par excellence*. All that you can say is that there are tendencies to Hyde in every Jekyll and inclinations to Jekyll in every Hyde. God bless the wives who have the wit and wisdom to save the men they love, instead of setting them adrift when the other fellow in them goes to pulling them astray."

They were passing under the ivy-covered arch when the glass door was opened by a negro and a radiant woman stepped out upon the marble, waiting, smiling, with a kiss for her husband and a hand for his guest. It was most unparliamentary, but so real as to be almost divine, and as the stranger bent, reverently, over the hand, he was wondering what such a man, with such a wife, could know of the abstract meaning, even, of words like tragedy and the gate of hell.

II

It is on the sunny side of Iowa Circle, a little place, low and brick, wedged between two higher buildings which make it look even smaller than it is; but it is rather pretty and has an individuality and artistic sense which the others lack.

It is better now, in some respects, than it used to be, for it has recently been renovated and modernized. A dozen or more years ago it was decidedly behind the times and the rent was accordingly low.

The rent and individual picturesqueness overcame the shortcomings in the mind of the new senator's wife, who was the executive of home, and the little place, as it was in those days, became the abode of the Hon. William Roberts when he was elected to the United States Senate.

He had served a term in the House of Representatives as a boy bachelor and, sadder and wiser, had gone home again to Maganaw, to a golden law practice, resolved to lay up a fortune before he ever again delved in national politics.

He married the girl whom he had always intended to marry and was beginning to coin money, when there came an unexpected and undesired demand for him to represent his State in the Senate. He assured his wife that no mortal could be a senator on a senator's salary, yet she advised him to accept.

She believed that there were infinite possibilities in her husband which he could realize if the wheels of home could only be run so smoothly that he should never be aware that they turned at all, and after carefully considering each detail she believed that there lay in her the executive ability to do it. She made him the business proposition that, for his private purposes and political exigencies, he rely upon what was already laid by and what might accrue through occasional law matters, while she took the salary, supplying everything and paying all the bills.

Upon that basis she advised him to accept. For longer than he could remember—even in the making of mud pies—he had looked to her for advice and had usually acted upon it. He accepted the nomination.

So scrupulously was the compact kept that during twelve years of senatorial life the Hon. William Roberts never heard a word concerning household affairs or bills. None of the prescribed necessities of senatorial dignity were lacking, and that his wife was rather closely confined, rather modestly gowned, rather retiring when it came to social functions, seemed to him only to indorse his wisdom in marrying a good, plain, sensible girl.

One single moment of his life excepted, he had never given her a thought in the line of personal charms. Had anyone questioned him he might even have said that she had none. He had always intended to marry her; in fact, he had never thought of marrying anyone else, simply because she was so obviously intended for him. She always understood him before he understood himself. She always inspired him to higher ideals than he could even see, alone. Had anyone ventured to

ask him if he loved his wife he would certainly have said, "Of course I love her." And of course he did, in an honest, commonplace kind of way, with infinite confidence.

He did not care, himself, for elaborate social functions. He usually went to them alone; because his wife insisted that it was his duty to himself, to his future and to his constituents.

They were happy. They had no Wilderness, therefore no Pisgah, no bent-backed plodding toward some Promised Land. They were happy, yet not *very* happy.

During the first years the senator always kissed his wife when he left the breakfast table, which was usually their parting for the day, and for years she waited for him at the door, when he returned, to welcome him with a kiss; until the returning became very irregular and something admonished her quick feminine perception that there was a perfunctory touch in the return of her greeting. And through these earlier years, beside a fire in the senator's library, two chairs, socially drawn, were placed, and here the two good friends spent many evenings together.

While the senator smoked his wife read aloud from the *Congressional Record*, and in a quiet way they talked politics and discussed problems. Many of his best thoughts, which seemed to slip spontaneously from his lips on the floor of the Senate, were born and nursed by that open fire, and the senator was never slow in acknowledging the indebtedness to his wife.

He rose phenomenally in the Senate, but subtly, after all; by an "insidious hypnotism," someone said, and there was some truth in the statement. He was not an angular, awkward, preposterous genius, from whom one would know at a glance that there must come something fabulous—or nothing. He was an exceptionally handsome man, and he possessed the strength of an athlete; yet this power was so veiled beneath an atmosphere of languor as to give one an impression,

when he was sitting, that it would be almost too much of an effort for him to rise. His heavy brows had the same languorous way of seeming to rest on half-closed eyelids.

The difference between the romance and the reality of the man was aptly delineated in a New York office, where the counsel and advisers in an important corporation case were considering the personnel of the opposition. One of them remarked: "They have pulled in a big, handsome, sleepy fellow, Senator Roberts of Maganaw, for the handle on his name, I suppose. He evidently doesn't know enough about law or care enough about the case to keep awake. He leaned back in his chair as though he were in a private box at the Opera. Upon my word, I half expected to hear him snore!"

Someone who knew replied: "If Billy Roberts of Maganaw is on the other side, and if he really falls asleep, take my advice and for God's sake don't wake him up."

When Roberts spoke the words were like the man—graceful and languid, but powerful. The stranger's first impression was that it was a separate burden for him to speak each word and that to listen long would be impossible. The senator himself never appeared to be paying much attention to what he said; yet in a moment the stranger found himself listening as never before in his life—with a sense of crowding his wits and urging every latent energy to the task, as though the man were talking too rapidly for one to comprehend.

There was another quality, which became evident only with time. A dozen might have spoken during the afternoon, but of them all only one speech needed no reference to refresh the memory. What Senator Roberts said seemed unforgettable. The qualities upon which his wife had fixed her faith made him more than a leader on his own side of the chamber—they made him a terror to the other side.

The lobbies and restaurants, the cloak-rooms and corridors emptied of members and the wine-colored arm-

chairs behind the crescents of little desks filled quickly when Senator Roberts had the floor. He had such a quiet, drowsy way of making most profound and startling statements that they never seemed profound or startling till one read them in the *Record* next morning.

The opposition very soon discovered that only by watching every syllable could they manage to insert discordant questions, disquieting, a little at least, the even tenor of his convincing arguments.

More and more the ablest and quickest of the opposition felt under party obligations to assail Senator Roberts at every paragraph, to tangle, twist, torment him—anything to throw him off the track of that deliberate, subtle monotone.

But they were like fox terriers about a mastiff. The thought is not original; it is borrowed from cartoons in which Senator Roberts figured as the mastiff—so charged with partisan necessities that, often though they fell floundering, the laughing-stock of the galleries and even of the sedate Senate itself, despite the gavel of the president *pro tem.*, they were up again and at it, so long as power to bark was left in them.

Often they were too eager to snap a sentence to wait for the parliamentary inquiry, from the chair, if the senator from Maganaw would yield to the senator from somewhere else; but whether in or out of order, the senator from Maganaw always yielded, dropping the sentence where it stood, with a drowsy "Certainly," and stood like an uninterested schoolboy, receiving the assaults and upsetting the assailants till the storm subsided. Then he would return to the break, repeat the unfinished sentence and wander slowly along with his original argument as though nothing had occurred to interrupt.

No one ever saw Senator Roberts ruffled, physically or mentally; but ruffled he was, and so near to exasperation that, one evening by the open fire, he said: "If the opposition don't stop that yawping every time I try to speak I'll quit the Senate and go back

to law. It's confoundedly comfortable to be able to finish what you have to say after you take the trouble to begin. They grow worse every session."

The senator's wife looked up from the *Record*, in which she had been reading aloud of some of those interruptions, but she looked no farther than the coals. She never looked into her husband's eyes when they sat talking together. She alone knew why, for she alone knew how it made her heart throb and her lips quiver; how words, such different words, came crowding to take the place of the cold things which she must say on the subjects which interested him, if she looked into his eyes. The only time she ever really looked was when he came to kiss her, after breakfast; and when the senator forgot and the custom ceased, much as she missed it, she was almost glad; she had been in such daily danger of betraying herself to the man she loved.

She looked into the fire and her soft voice said: "Yes, it must be very annoying, Billy dear."

"Damnably!" said the senator.

Very gently—she always spoke so softly—his wife continued: "It's very suggestive. It is one of the pleasantest of comments, isn't it?—these increasing interruptions."

"H'm!" said the senator; and the silence stretched out till he added:

"Look at Senator Bumpus's speech. Two hours and not a whisper."

"Yes. It glides along like blank verse."

"Why not? They let him alone."

"He read it, I suppose?"

"Yes. From *Record* proof-sheets."

"Do you think it very original and strong, Billy dear?"

"Strong as water and a rhythmic rehash of established facts. They stopped me untold times while I was establishing them. But when he set the same things to music they wouldn't have dropped a pin for fear of hearing it. Just look through last week's *Record* and you'll see the time I had saying those very things."

"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," Billy dear; but it wears it.

I've seen it all in the *Record*. The only thing that I miss there is the gestures. Sometimes they are so funny. There ought to be some way of printing them. Do you ever gesticulate, Billy dear, when you are excited?"

"It's too much trouble to get excited, Maude. I'm too conservative."

A low laugh rippled over the coals and up the chimney as the senator's wife replied: "The conservative is just the man to get excited. He is conservative because he's too cowardly to fight and too lazy to run, and there's nothing else to do but get excited. You'll never be caught in that predicament, Billy dear; but I'm glad if you don't bother about gestures. Some day I mean to muster courage to steal into the gallery when you are to speak. So far I daren't so much as even look toward the Capitol on days when you are intending to address the Senate. One day—I never told you of it, it was so silly—I was in the gallery when, all of a sudden, you stood up. There was fight in your face. I could see it. I thought I should faint. But someone mercifully shut you off just long enough to let me steal away.

"What furious work even some of the brightest men in the Senate do make with their hands and coat-tails! And then the way they slap their hands as if they were catching flies or mosquitos. One would think that the very dignity of the situation would keep them still. Did Senator Bumpus gesticulate?"

"He didn't lift a finger, except twice to flick his glasses off and have a look about, to see if anyone was listening."

"Of course not. He has the art of oratory better than any man in the Senate. The only trouble with him is that anything but a flood of eloquence, from his lips, must flow from some other soul. It must be a rehash or nothing, so no one is afraid of him."

"It isn't so much the interruption, Maude, as it is the way a fellow must make a fool of himself, trying to answer their questions. They are so

beastly irrelevant, most of them," the senator muttered.

III

From time untold men far enough afront to be recognized have found that the pen was mightier than the sword, and have dreaded the power of the pencil more than both. A good cartoon will prosper in the work it is to do better than all the editorials, campaign documents and shafts of oratory ever launched upon the sea of sentiment.

The *Weekly Search-Light* realized this fact and made itself the tremendous power it was by setting its policy wisely, making its selections shrewdly and securing, at a salary sufficient to retain, every thoroughly brilliant cartoonist the moment that he proved himself to be the man they needed. If they did not use him they silenced him.

Strebor, an artist not unknown in oils, had been on the staff of the *Search-Light* longer than the senator had been in Washington, and very early in the brilliant career which each was effecting in his sphere the artist discovered the senator, and from his hiding-place made a careful study of him.

Modestly, at first, never too frequently, but with constantly increasing boldness and prominence, as the senator rose, Strebor's cartoons followed close after him. So closely they followed him that the senator sometimes admitted to his wife that the cartoons were really ahead of him, pulling him into unearned and undeserved prominence.

"I don't believe it would be possible, Billy dear," his wife replied. "The world would know it at once if a cartoon tried to make you bigger than you really are. It would not only fall into its own fulsomeness but it would pull you in after it. You would hear from it soon enough, if anyone thought you were a pet of the *Search-Light*. The fact that there is

nothing of the kind seems to me good evidence that those who know you—your importance, I mean—much better than you know, are quite sure that the cartoons are well on the safe side.”

“Well, I am more afraid of that man Strebor than I like to be, and I wish that he would let me alone,” the senator muttered. “I know that he has helped me along tremendously, whether the world is aware of it or not; and I know, too, what will happen when I do something which he misconstrues or disapproves. His name has become a guaranty and he knows altogether too much about present political questions to be safe. Some fine day he will turn against me and, as great as his building up has been, so great will be the fall of it.”

The senator’s wife sat caressing the edge of the fender with the toe of one slipper, supported on the toe of another.

“Billy dear,” she said, “when you are in the Senate or a court-room your optimism stands at the small end of a telescope and sees everything. Here in this renaissance of domesticity you take all the pessimism in you to the large end of the telescope—and still you see everything.”

“You know as well as I, Maude, that but for the *Search-Light*, and those who have taken hints from it, my name would not be known outside of Maganaw and Washington.”

“Whose would, Billy dear, but for the newspapers?”

“Newspapers are harmless as thunder, whereas Strebor’s cartoons are straight lightning. I would rather be cursed by some newspapers than blessed by them if I were hunting for good advertising; but a few shafts from Strebor would kill the best man in the country.”

“Well, you are that man, Billy dear, and for my part I’m glad that Strebor knows it,” his wife replied. “These smoke-dreams of yours in that armchair are only mechanical mixtures, while we must believe that the *Search-Light* is working with real chemical compounds.”

A peculiar silence fell about the open fire. The senator’s wife would have been loath to disturb it for any less excuse than that the house was falling down. She knew those silences instantly, but she never understood them. She never knew the depth or shallowness of what she said, while she smothered the dream-thoughts thrilling and throbbing in her to fly to the man she loved. Afterward, when she found some word of hers woven into grave debate or resounding oration—even coming back sometimes in all the *éclat* of campaign slogans—the broken bits of things which, of themselves, had slipped from her lips, there by the open fire, she felt a strange pride.

Many a time the senator called her attention to the thefts, remarking: “That was yours, Maude. It was too good to lose, so I stuffed it.” And she replied: “Send the bouquets to the taxidermist, Billy dear; they don’t belong to me. Mechanics are forever making things which are of no possible value except in the hands of those who understand the use of them.”

Presently the senator was leisurely puffing his cigar again. The room was as still as before, but his wife knew that the silence had been broken and her soft voice said to the fire:

“It is not the wit but the fact in a cartoon which gives it power. The sugar-coating makes one laugh, but it is the truth which is spoken in jest that takes effect. The wit only opens the pores for the microbe of stern reality. The microbe must be there or the public mind will never be seriously infected by the innocuous virus permeating a cartoonist’s agony. There is more to it than the irresponsible hypnotism of humor, Billy dear.”

“Then I really resemble a mastiff, do I, Maude?” the senator asked, flicking the ashes from his cigar in a way that was perilously like a gesture.

He asked it because, from the very outset, Strebor had clung persistently to that presentment; so persistently

that at last, in any cartoon under heaven, even in England and Germany, the mastiff stood for Senator Roberts as plainly as the tiger meant Tammany, the elephant the G. O. P. and the poor little ass meant Democracy.

With her low laugh the senator's wife replied: "Billy dear, you do not *resemble* a mastiff. No; I am not quite fond enough of dogs for that. That is only the funny part of it. The microbe that gives force to Strebor's fancy is the fact that after all you really *are* a mastiff—a great big mastiff; the *canis major* of the Senate; the bright dog-star of the party's constellation; Sirius, the first, fixed star in the nation's firmament! And if that is not being a dog, Billy dear, pray tell me what is it?"

"I'm overwhelmed in fulsomeness, Maude. I give it up," the senator said, throwing his cigar in the fire and going into another room.

Nevertheless, at uncertain intervals the Strebor cartoons continued. The mastiff still made his apt appearances and the senator continued to tremble lest a change come over the spirit of the cartoonist's dreams.

After a contest which he waged, as champion of the administration, over a measure which he finally carried to successful conclusion in the face of vicious and frantic opposition, in which he was himself mercilessly assailed with every form of insinuation permitted by parliamentary usage, even to the very tap of the president's gavel, the mastiff appeared in the full-page of the *Search-Light*, stretched comfortably on the ground, sound asleep, his nose resting on the bill. About him stood a rampant array of terriers, with the features of those senators who had been most prominent in their attacks. Their tails were in every state of twist-edness. Their ears were dilapidated and they were halt and maimed, but barking furiously. Beneath it were the words: "Be careful, sonny, that you don't wake him up."

An international measure requiring the utmost delicacy and caution came

before the Senate. Ill-advised expressions were in grave danger of precipitating war; but a national election was approaching. To entangle the administration was too great a temptation and a natural obstructionist introduced a resolution, equally regardless of the impossibility of its passing and of the effect of its contention on the foreign country, simply because it opened a door for political pyrotechnics on the part of some of his colleagues who commanded brigades of able-bodied grudges and battalions of campaign hopes.

No material harm could come to the administration from a little fresh vituperation. The party was practically as sure of the coming election as the senators were that the resolution could not pass; but its discussion not only delayed action upon a measure which, internationally, it was most expedient to have quickly and unanimously settled, but the sentiments which would be expressed, for partisan purposes, were sure to convey a false impression to the foreign country, increasing the grave danger which the administration was most anxious to avoid.

Senator Roberts may have been asleep when the resolution was offered, but he was on his feet before the clerk had finished reading it.

"Mr. President, I object to discussion upon such a resolution," he said. "I cannot prevent it. I only wish that I could. It is a purely partisan attack upon the administration, and as such it cannot accomplish anything. The danger in its discussion is to an ignorant people, far away from us, already in an excited state, who will be inspired by false hopes that they can obtain help from this body in their present contention. No senator in this chamber would vote to give them support, if that were the resolution; and if the senators who are anxious to dispense their partisan eloquence, in silver speech, through the megaphone of this resolution, could be held physically accountable for the result of their words in that other country, there

would be golden silence on the other side of the chamber till this resolution was buried beyond resurrection."

The tirade which forthwith broke about his graying head was as stupendous as the cause for it was paltry. The chief among the fighters of the opposition slapped his hands frantically and exclaimed:

"From my viewpoint I can see no such danger as the senator from Maganaw so graphically prognosticates, and I do not propose to have him stifle me. I do not propose to allow him to dictate to me nor curtail the one inalienable salvation of this sacred chamber—the right of unlimited debate. I propose to discuss this resolution, or some other of a similar nature, in spite of any nefarious measures which may be introduced. I propose to say what I have to say, and say it here, on the floor of the Senate, in spite of the senator from Maganaw and all his cohorts. And I propose to defend my colleagues in that right—to fight for it to the bitter end!"

It was only three days later when the *Search-Light* appeared with the mastiff, his forefeet on a rock, his head erect and his eyes wide open. Down in the grass, only their heads and tails visible, were the rampant terriers. One of them, whose face was unmistakable, was saying to the rest: "I see no such danger as he predicts, and I say, 'Let us bark!' That's what we're here for."

The title of the cartoon was "The Viewpoint." Beneath it the two speeches were printed in full.

IV

For twelve years the lion and the lamb lay down together. The cartoonist did not change his spots nor did the mastiff turn his coat; but if Senator Roberts felt, at the beginning of his career, that he had a monitor worthy of grave consideration, he felt it more with each succeeding year.

A Strebor cartoon became the invariable full-page feature of the *Search-*

Light. Only upon occasions not frequent enough for fulsomeness did the mastiff predominate. The entire political arena was swept, and its dust—gold dust or debris—was made the pigment for some potent delineation by one whom all admitted held the great political problems of the day in the hollow of his hand and was becoming a cardinal force to be considered by those who would manipulate public matters or party plans.

A senator prominent on the minority side once asserted in the cloak-room: "I would rather suppress the *Search-Light* and blindfold Strebor than gag the senator from Maganaw and silence that whole side of the Senate."

The *Search-Light* heard of it, as it seemed to hear everything. It quoted the senator in heavy type and stated officially that M. Strebor was then receiving a salary of \$12,000 a year, and that the *Search-Light* stood ready to increase it whenever occasion warranted.

Figures in oil by Strebor were also becoming so much the rage that fabulous prices were paid, and even at that more than half the orders he received were declined, through his utter lack of time to fill them.

The mastiff was being caricatured *ad nauseam* by antagonistic journals, but even the senator from Maganaw had come to hold his wife's convictions concerning the innocuous virus of the cartoonist's agony when it lacked the microbe of truth, and looked upon the outside portrayals, whether *pro* or *con*, as amounting to little else than gratuitous advertising. All the more for that, however, he dreaded some change in the *Search-Light*.

On the infrequent occasions, however, when the mastiff appeared it was always at some apt moment when the impressionable but forgetful public could be most forcibly reminded that head and shoulders above his countrymen there stood one man who was trustworthy, brave and strong. But each new evidence only served to strengthen the senator's dread of the time when Strebor should begin to

depict weak points instead; when he should turn his pencil to the task of making a muzzle for the mastiff, putting the beast on a precautionary chain or setting the world agog with a suggestive "*Cave Canem*" under some cartoon.

Long since, the busy years had swept away the quiet home customs in the little house on Iowa Circle. They had gradually disappeared—simply fallen into desuetude. The two chairs before the fire were rarely occupied. The reading aloud of the *Record* and occasional discussion of contingent problems had long been abandoned, and as domestic matters were never a subject of conversation it came of itself to the conclusion that very little was ever talked about at all.

Nothing was consciously strained in the relations between the senator and his wife. He was simply occupied with his thoughts. He surely had enough to think about, and when he considered the matter at all it was with a sense of gratitude that his wife was not one of the talking kind. It was simply that the pressure of larger affairs had absorbed him and gradually carried him beyond what he conceived to be within her comprehension, so that he had outgrown the habit of consulting with her before the open fire. It was simply this, nothing sudden; nor was there anything doubtful about the transaction which he would rather hide than that resulted in the fact that Senator Roberts had never so much as mentioned to his wife a great dream which had been growing in his dozing hours, and had come, by degrees, aided by the demands of certain influential allies, into waking activity as a problem, then as a plan which could undoubtedly be carried through to a successful issue unless—there was one grave, aye, fatal possibility—unless its progress was interrupted by the *Search-Light*. The senator knew, and frankly admitted it to himself, that he should triumph or fail irretrievably according to the whim of Strebor, when he chose to note the setting of the tide.

It was not a position of dependency

which the senator naturally enjoyed; but when he quietly cursed the conditions and reminded himself of his wish, from the outset, that Strebor would let him alone, he turned about and confronted himself with the fact that if Strebor had let him alone the present possibility would never have been his.

There was altogether too much of the mastiff in him to bend gracefully to the rod of one who was stronger. But Strebor was stronger. Strebor could crush him or render his victory sure. It was simply a fact. There was no evading it. It would not avail to consider the matter with his wife, and, having gone so far alone, he felt a kind of pride in completing the conquest before he reported it. Obviously, however, he must get hold of Strebor and have a plain understanding with him before he ventured to take the first step.

With all the delicacy of innate and lifelong diplomacy, Senator Roberts wrote to Strebor, pleasantly referring to many picturesque courtesies of the past, with the hope that he might not forfeit his generous consideration in the future. He trusted that the artist would believe him most anxious to reciprocate, in any way that lay in his power, and would also give him the pleasure of his company at dinner the next time that he was in Washington.

Strebor's reply was not all that the senator had wished. He seemed to read something between the lines. He simply regretted that for purely professional reasons it would be undesirable, both for the senator and for the artist, that they should be personally acquainted.

Possibly the senator read more than the artist intended, but he thought that he detected the reserve of a sometime antagonist. A few days later he heard the cloak-room gossip that a very handsome offer had been made to Strebor to put some bandages, a lame leg and a blind eye on the mastiff.

Irrespective of personal sentiments, the senator saw the obvious necessity of another and more definite letter to Strebor, in which he urged that at least

he be allowed, in some tangible fashion, to show his appreciation of the artist's past consideration.

The reply to this was even more disquieting. Courteously, but plainly, Strebor stated that the *Search-Light* paid him fully for all his work on the paper, so that anything more would be pure gratuity and that "to accept a gift was to dissolve the pearl of independence in the vinegar of obligation; to sell stock in oneself when, no matter how honorable the purchaser, he would own the stock and have an undeniable right to vote upon it."

The senator ground his teeth and tried again to wish that Strebor had let him alone. Then he wished that he had let Strebor alone; till the futility of both appeared, so far as they affected the vital situation, and only the fact remained that the correspondence had made a probability of what before had been but an ugly dream. He was facing the gravest crisis that would be possible in his entire career. It would be rash to foolhardiness to open the door and face the nation till he knew to a certainty the position of the *Search-Light*. It was not cowardice. The brave man hesitates while making up his mind. The coward hesitates afterward.

Senator Roberts was practically sure that Strebor's phenomenal political insight had already detected the move he had in mind, and his letters really did indicate at least the possibility of an effort to checkmate him. If the effort was made he knew that he should fall, in irredeemable ridicule. He was not graphically humorous or by nature artistic; but his brain was working under the inspiration of exigency, and he fancied that he already saw a cartoon upon the artist's table, in which the mastiff was wallowing in the agonies of strangulation, from having tried to swallow the White House.

The time was narrowing and Senator Roberts did what he had never done before except at the grate fire in the little library. He opened the door of his heart a meagre, grudging crack. Forced by dire necessity he wrote again

to Strebor, acknowledging that the desire he had to meet him was, in part, for the opportunity to consult with a man who evidently knew the world and public opinion better than he could, entangled as he was in the meshes of partisanship; that a proposition had been presented to him upon which he had in no way committed himself, concerning which he was anxious to consult with one as intelligent and disinterested as the artist, and also to learn the probable position of the *Search-Light* in the possible contingency. He closed by asking, directly, if this end could not be in some way accomplished.

The reply gave him a profounder respect than ever for Strebor's insight and diplomatic qualities and a greater dread than ever of Strebor's pencil.

The senator honors me more than I deserve, but sincerely, I am sure, and I also feel that, with the same sincerity, he will permit me to say that the plan he has in mind can doubtless be accomplished at the present time, though at the outset it will produce a slight shock, being a little premature; while four years later it will work out its own fulfilment, by natural law, without an effort on the part of his friends and even in spite of them, assuring him a more efficient and unassailable conclusion. In the meantime—a very critical period it promises to be for the country—there is another very important post which ought to be filled by the best man the nation can produce and can be so filled only in case the plan which the senator is considering should be temporarily abandoned.

Concerning the *Search-Light*, I may say, emphatically, that it does not and would not wish to lead. It simply tries to follow, faithfully, approving that which is best and denouncing that which is degenerate. It takes no pleasure in combating any honest ambition with the good of the country as its fundamental energy; and it is scarcely conceivable that in this or any other emergency the senator will ever act upon any other basis than his country's welfare.

Senator Roberts read the letter only once and tore it up with deliberate care, as he sat at his desk in the Senate chamber.

That evening he attended a dinner in one of the private rooms of the Willard, where several important political factors met, intending to launch a Presidential boom which promised an easy victory in the approaching convention.

The President was naturally anxious to serve another term. He was particularly anxious as a matter of redeeming the past, in which there was one feature which was being turned seriously against him. Certain international affairs had not been conducted with as much credit to the nation as might have resulted. Those who knew realized that the blame rested chiefly with the Secretary of State, but history would not lift it from the President's shoulders if he were compelled to quit the office under the shadow of a cloud. Otherwise his administration had been exceptionally popular. There was but one man in the country who could carry the convention against him and carry the nation, at the polls, as surely and safely as he. That man was especially distinguished for his tenacious loyalty to his country's honor and for his brilliant diplomatic qualities.

Naturally the President thought of Senator Roberts much as Senator Roberts thought of the policy of the *Search-Light*, and was correspondingly relieved, as some were disappointed and more surprised, when the morning papers, following the dinner at the Willard, printed a brief speech delivered by the senator, in which he said:

I have given the subject, in a general way, in connection with other names, more serious thought than would have been appropriate, hitherto, in connection with my own. The argument is equally applicable. I do not think that any man, today, can wisely distract attention by allowing his name to appear as a possible candidate before the coming convention. There is but one natural candidate. He has the right, pending negotiations and problems that are far from finished and great work that cannot possibly be completed during the present term, to our undivided support and unquestioned loyalty. I believe that the nation will emerge from her present critical position with less friction and with greater honor, at home and abroad, if we unanimously sustain our present Chief Executive. For myself I say, decidedly and finally, that I am not a candidate and will not be a candidate. So far as human foresight can ordain, I shall use my best efforts to insure the re-election of our present President for the ensuing term.

Nothing in Senator Roberts's life welded a stronger link between him

and the hearts of the people or brought him into greater prominence abroad. He saw it all, the moment he read Strebor's letter, and only wondered that he could not have seen it by himself, and saved the humiliation of that correspondence.

The *Search-Light* reported the dinner and the speech, commenting editorially, and, with remarkable celerity, suggesting at least a preconceived notion on the part of the cartoonist, presented a full-page cartoon, entitled: "Where Our Country Needs Her Mastiff More."

The great gable of the State Department end formed a kennel, the head of the mastiff was under the arch, his paw resting on the Portfolio of State. Over the arch was written: "A word to the wise."

V

SENATOR ROBERTS smoked his cigar by the open fire a night or two after the dinner. He knew that his wife had lost her interest in politics, but it would be hard to feel that she had also lost her pride in his career. It had hardly seemed worth while to mention, in advance, the possibility of a nomination, but now that the papers were full of it the senator found himself curious, if not rather hungry, for his wife's opinion.

He smoked his cigar, but received no opinion. With a feeling that something of value had gone from his life he made up his mind that his wife had so thoroughly lost interest in everything that she did not even read the newspapers and actually did not know what had happened. It shocked him; but revolve the matter as he would he could see no other reason for her silence except that, being a woman, she had failed to look ahead four years, and might be disappointed that she had lost the opportunity of living in the White House. It was very unlike her. He could hardly conceive that life as a President's wife could promise any attractive features to one

like her—she was so little given to society.

Until that moment he had never even thought of her as in any way concerned in the consideration. Could it be that she was disappointed in not becoming the first lady in the land?

The first lady in the land! The thought struck him absurdly at first, then uncomfortably. He glanced at his wife. He had never imagined her as in any way a part of his political career. He looked again. She was bending over some needlework. He listened to the click of the needle on the thimble and the zip of the thread. They were delicate and pretty hands. He had never noticed it before, but they were very pretty. There were only two rings. He remembered them both—the wedding ring and the engagement ring. He felt a vague impression that most women wore more than that. At least one woman whom he knew wore more. He remembered her hands distinctly. He had made her a birthday present of a diamond ring only a few days before, and when she thanked him for it, in the evening, he had noticed that her hands fairly flashed with other diamonds. But the hands themselves were not so pretty as those he was watching.

Then he looked at the plain black bodice and narrow white collar. Their simplicity rose to high art, if he could only have appreciated the fact, but he saw only the simplicity. He had always considered his wife as a good, healthy, trustworthy accessory of life—pertaining more to the house than to him.

He had been looking, of late, into another face—a brilliant, colorful, laughing, chatting, red-lipped, tempting, longing-for-something face. On the instant, before he could control himself, the words drove him to compare the two. He was intensely uncomfortable. He shook himself, as a mastiff might, in trying to dislodge something clutching his throat.

His wife always seemed to him at her best when she talked. It was in

an honest desire to bring her up to her best that he said:

“Senator Slocum is slashing the administration mercilessly just now. He is making a strong bid for the leadership of his party.”

“I hope he may succeed,” his wife replied, without looking up. She was counting stitches. The old “Billy dear” had long been relegated with other home customs of its ilk.

“Why?” asked the senator, half expecting some spiteful reference to the dinner at the Willard, which would give him a hint. But the needle clicked and the thread zipped again as the soft voice replied:

“There is so much of the lethargy of unanimity in your own ranks, just now, that a really clever man, like Cosgrove, might almost manage to slip through the door while your party leaders are holding it open and bowing to one another.”

The senator smoked for a moment, wondering if he had caught a spark from the dying fire—not for a moment considering how little opportunity he gave himself, of late, to catch the sparks, even had the fire burned as brightly as long before. At length he said:

“I’m not just sure that Slocum cannot do that little trick himself if he has the opportunity. He has been evincing some rather good material in the Senate of late.”

“He has been exhibiting the audacity of his opinions in the chaparral, I know, but when it comes to displaying the courage of his convictions out in the open, he will not be there.”

“At any rate, he has been playing rather successfully to the galleries, in a pull for public sentiment.”

“But public sentiment is only the snap-shot guess of ignorant and uninformed people,” the senator’s wife said slowly, straightening a thread with the point of her needle. “The mass of Americans have a way of leaving sentiment at home and expressing public *opinion* in their judgment at the polls. If Senator Slocum ventures out of the Senate chaparral into the open

and becomes a candidate, I am very sure he will find himself immersed in an eternal quietus."

The needle went on with its clicking and the senator with his thinking. He was a man whose mental harmony was never vexed with vanity. The state of being exceptionally handsome was as natural to him as the state of being white, and he had never given more concern to one than to the other. That the encroachments of Time, thus far, were but the finishing touches of the master's brush to a perfect painting, emphasizing its excellences, simply resulted in the fact that his attention had never been distracted to himself by evidences of old age.

To say that he had lived his life without temptations might lead to misconstruction; for no man, with even ordinary mental and physical qualities, is ever far from social opportunities for greater or less digression, from the cradle of development to the grave of ambition. But the cannon does not roar where there is no ear to hear. Opportunities are not temptations where the might-be victim is not alert for them. No man ever yet was tempted by anything who did not first put himself in the way of it. So it is true that Senator Roberts had lived his life, till recently, without temptation. His brain had been so busy in its broadening field that he had never considered even his wife as more than a fireside companion and had finally forgotten that.

He might never have known the meaning of the word had it not been that in his legal capacity he had assumed the administration of a large estate, on behalf of a beautiful and ambitious young widow, who was one of the brilliant social lights of Washington.

It would have been impossible for these two not to appreciate each other. It was only a case of cause and effect when prolonged intimacy ripened into—how little, compared with what it might, probably the senator and his beautiful client knew best; how much, compared with what it should, inquisi-

tive servants and gossips may have thought they knew. It was their own affair—surely not ours, at any rate.

The only thing pertinent is that at last Senator Roberts was living in temptation and the effect of it permeated, as it always does, everything. Even as he sat once more in the little library, that wretched phrase persistently returned, and every time he shuddered and thought of the other face, so responsive to the fiendish fire which filled his veins when he looked into it. He ground his teeth, but in spite of every effort to shut it off he thought how different "The First Lady in the Land" would sound and seem to him if—

He threw his cigar impatiently into the fire, and saying that he was to attend the convention committee meeting at the Arlington and should not be back till late, he left his wife bending over her sewing by the open fire.

When the outer door closed behind him, however, the needle ceased its clicking. Slowly the senator's wife opened a drawer in her work-table and drew out a photograph. She smiled—such a sad smile—through tears that trickled down her cheeks as she looked at it; it was such a brilliant, laughing face, so full of longing and—temptation.

"Shadows are the ashes of sunshine," she whispered, and repeated the word sunshine as though caressing it. Then she added softly: "His methods may sometimes seem wrong to me, but the man himself is always right. Billy dear, you are the noblest and the very best of men. I hope that she will not wholly make you forget me—forever."

VI

UNDER the circumstances it seemed only proper to Senator Roberts that he should write once more to Strebor, assuring him that his letter had carried weight in assisting to the final decision, and suggesting that if, at any future time, from his better prospect of the world, a friendly word of coun-

sel occurred to him, the senator would be very glad to consider it.

On the whole, the senator felt a certain satisfaction in the way that he emerged from the humiliating correspondence, leaving Strebor rather on his honor to notify him, at least, before he ever changed the current of his forceful cartoons. After that he breathed easier and closed the letter with the diplomatic suggestion that, as this was wholly outside of the sphere of the press or public service, he hoped the artist would remember that whenever it lay in his power he should be very glad to reciprocate.

Strebor's letter was the unexpected. He said:

There is a favor which I had hoped some chance would afford me the opportunity to ask. I have to decline many orders for portraits, under the truthful assertion that I have not the time to paint them. It sometimes covers, as well, the fact that the proposed face fails to interest me. I had the honor of having the senator's wife pointed out to me in the Senate gallery. It is a face which I should like to paint. The pleasure will fully compensate me for the work. I am to have a temporary studio in Philadelphia the last week in the month. If it is agreeable to the senator and to Mrs. Roberts, I should like to have her sit to me for an hour or two on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth.

The twenty-fourth was the date of the last grand ball at the White House. The man who is living in temptation is not really reasonably responsible for the spontaneous presentiments of his brain. Senator Roberts was himself thoroughly indignant that the first thought which flashed before him suggested that if his wife were in Philadelphia that night—

He was so honestly indignant that, when he handed the letter to his wife at the breakfast table the next morning, without even waiting to explain how he came to be in correspondence with Strebor, he said:

"The date which he sets, the twenty-fourth, is the date of the White House ball. I will write to him to change the time. I merely want to know, before writing, that you are perfectly willing to sit."

"I am perfectly willing to sit, dear," she replied, her eyes resting on the letter while she nervously folded and unfolded a corner of it. Her lips trembled a little, too; she longed so desperately to look into her husband's eyes, to forget the commonplace words of life which she must speak, to look her very heart down into his and pour into his ears those rushing, throbbing, tingling words of fire which had burned in her so long; while better and better, through each gone year, she had realized how plainly he expected something else—or nothing.

"I am perfectly willing to sit, dear," she said. "But much more am I willing to be away from Washington on the twenty-fourth. Even if I could easily afford to dress for that ball it would be silly for me to go. So much will be made of you that night, dear, for the noble way in which you refused to take the nomination from the President. I am always very proud and happy when I feel that you are being appreciated, and I always want to go away somewhere and hide. And if a woman knows beside that she is not properly put together, why, she cannot possibly enjoy society except through the newspapers. Let me take the opportunity to be away, dear. I will visit the Armads. They have so often urged me. I'll stay several days, dear, if you don't mind."

Senator Roberts believed, with his wife, that it would be pleasanter for her, and consented as a matter of course. It was only that first wild thought which troubled him—troubled him till he left his coffee, left his breakfast, bent over his wife's bowed head so quickly, so unexpectedly that she had no time to look up, kissed her neck and hurried from the house.

She could not have looked up, she wouldn't have looked up, at that moment, for her life; for in her eyes was something which her husband had never seen there, and the moment he was gone she ran to her room, locked the door, buried her face in the pillows and sobbed till the very room seemed reeling and trembling. It was

long before the sobs were broken by a choking whisper:

"O Lord, help me to be brave and hold on till he is elected. Then please—oh, please, let me die!"

But the White House ball held nothing for Senator Roberts which that first thought suggested. Whatever might have been was not. The rose was robbed of its fragrance. If his beautiful client realized that something had drawn him, for a moment, a little way off, she was too wise to show it and too much a woman of the world not to know that spasmodic circumstance is a natural, intermittent relapse, from which a quick and delicious recovery is the common course of things.

The President showed his appreciation of the senator and also of public opinion, by appointing him at the head of a commission of three of the ablest international lawyers in the country, empowered to investigate and adjust the most delicate complication that had ever arisen between the United States and one of the great World Powers. It necessitated his going abroad the moment that Congress adjourned.

For the first time in his life the senator's home relations had been visibly strained ever since his wife returned from Philadelphia. He had little time to worry over it, but he realized it, and when his wife suggested that it would be better for her to spend the summer with friends who were to be in New Hampshire, at the Wentworth, by the sea, he was very glad and in a vague, offhand way assured himself that a few months' separation would put them back again into the harmony of life which was all that home meant to him.

Just before he sailed the senator received a letter from Strebor asking permission to submit the portrait of his wife in a prize contest of American artists. It was a simple picture; the plainest kind of woman, with closely coiled hair, in a plain bodice with a narrow collar. The senator could not see the sense in exhibiting such a thing

in a prize contest; but if Strebor wanted to there was certainly no reason to refuse. He was more surprised, while abroad, to receive another letter, stating that the portrait had taken the first prize and asking permission to have it hung in the National Academy exhibition, which was about to open for the summer.

The senator was less versed in the ways of art than in anything but house-keeping. The fact surprised him, but the request was something he could not very well have refused, even had there appeared some reason.

His last post before returning brought him a delicately scented, sealed and crested letter from his fair client, asking that as soon as possible after his arrival he come to her, at Newport, for at least a week.

The same post brought him a letter from his wife. It was beautifully written. He could have read it across the room; but there were no odors of Eden or monogrammed seals. It simply congratulated him upon the brilliant success of his mission, which had been cabled to America, and which would do so much to restore the dignity which had been jeopardized by previous diplomatic blunders, and closed with the suggestion that there was a duty which he owed to himself to recuperate after such labor, before complying with the merciless demands of a political campaign at home; that he ought to devote at least a month to enjoying the best of Europe before he returned.

That post brought him also a number of home papers, in one of which there was an extended article on the National Academy exhibition. In the headline and opening paragraphs words were overworked in praise of Strebor's masterpiece, "The Head of a Woman." The writer dilated less upon the artist's ability than upon the marvelous beauty of the subject. He stated that at first it was generally conceded to be almost, of necessity, an ideal head, possessing all of the qualities of composite beauty within the scope of a facile master, but that a great many had already recognized it as a liv-

ing, speaking likeness of the beautiful wife of Senator Roberts.

Over the letter from his client the senator smiled and wrote that affairs of State were demanding so much of him that he must not only forego the pleasure of visiting Newport, but must also abandon any further care of the estate.

Over the letter from his wife he sighed and wrote that he was returning at once because he would rather spend with her what time he could devote to recreation.

Over the newspaper he frowned, and after a second reading laid it on the table.

The day he arrived he visited the Academy exhibition, taking the precaution to be alone. He easily found the portrait and for the first time in his life stood dumb before a situation which confronted him.

It was simply what the catalogue called it, "The Head of a Woman"—just that, nothing more; the head—and the shoulders. Her back was turned. She was looking over her shoulder and up, smiling. It was only a perfect profile; only a beautiful head in a cloud of wavy hair; only the curved neck of Cleopatra resting on the shoulders of Diana.

Beautiful? The senator asked himself how under heaven he had always been so blind. He could see it all—more than the critic saw—the most beautiful, the nearest to a perfect face his eyes had ever known, and it was precisely what the paper said: "A living, speaking portrait of his wife."

That thoughtful forehead, that earnest eye, those timidly courageous lips that always parted with a smile for him, that beautiful throat, that glorious hair. How often, oh, how often he had seen it all, before the open fire, through the miserable smoked glass of his wretched abstraction!

And those bare shoulders—that very pose! That same look, backward and upward and smiling! He brushed away the years that had blurred it all, and then, suddenly, he remembered. Ah, yes! he remembered! Oh, it was

so long ago; so many years ago! For so long he had looked upon those shoulders as simply the necessary frame for some sombre, inexpensive stuff with a narrow white collar. For so long he had forgotten all about the time he suddenly remembered; the time when he accidentally came upon his wife, from behind, while she was bathing.

He remembered how the hot blood surged through his veins for one moment of wild, fierce passion, of which, the very next, he was utterly ashamed. He remembered how, in that mad moment, when she stood there, looking back and up, and smiling at him, over her beautiful shoulder—how, in the scorching rush of fire he had caught her in his arms and kissed her neck and fled. The memory burned his cheeks and quivered and tingled in every nerve. And the recollection of all the years gone, murdered, thrown away, between then and now, while they had lived together and he had thought her only a part of the machinery of the house, came back to him now.

Then his face grew dark. He had come back to the present. He had realized that he was looking at a portrait—a portrait painted by Strebor; that his wife had posed, like that, for a stranger to sit, and look, and paint, for hours! And he knew how Strebor must have felt. He knew precisely how Strebor felt. And was he such a miracle of ice that he had sat, and seen, and felt, and simply painted—painted the head of a woman?

He did not blame his wife. He simply cursed himself for throwing what he had forgotten to value in the very face of a stranger—a stranger who knew enough to recognize the reality, even in the shadows of the Senate gallery and under the cheap, plain stuff and narrow white collar; and who told him that the pleasure of painting it would compensate him for the work. And the pleasure of painting it—was that all?

The determination seized him to find that fellow Strebor, and know

what manner of man he was; judge for himself if he was such a prodigy of art that he could sit, and see, and feel, and only *paint*—"The Head of a Woman."

He was a man of action when his course was laid. He took a carriage, forthwith, to the office of the *Search-Light*; but they were not very sure about Strebor. They said that he was spending the summer somewhere in New Hampshire; that his mail was always forwarded to the post-office, general delivery, at Portsmouth.

Senator Roberts drove back to his hotel and locked the door of his room, that he might not be disturbed while he read again his last letter from his wife, urging him not to hurry home, but to spend at least a month recuperating in Europe. He remembered the cloud that had hung persistently between them, after her return from Philadelphia, and that Portsmouth and the Wentworth were side by side. And Strebor—Strebor who had seen, who knew—Strebor was spending the summer there. His wife had asked him to go there, instead of going abroad with him. His wife had asked him to remain a month longer in Europe, instead of coming back to her. Then he thought of the reply he sent and hurried off a wire to tell her that complications had arisen which would prevent his coming to New Hampshire, but that he should be so little in Washington that she had better remain where she was for the present. He didn't blame Strebor. He didn't blame his wife. He blamed only himself, and he suffered—because he really loved his wife.

Sitting alone, in utter misery, he thought of the other letter and his reply and—not at least with any theory of revenge, retaliation or justifiable indulgence—simply because he was miserable for the first time, and did not understand, but longed to be anywhere, he sent a wire after that letter, too, saying that his plans were so changed that he could visit Newport in a few days.

The visit was not a success, how-

ever—not as he saw it, then. It was a series of disappointments, a sequence of awakenings. He left for Washington, wondering that he could ever have thought that woman in any way comparable with his wife.

In Washington, at least, he found himself easily alone. He never knew before what an utterly deserted place Washington could be. But he found a letter awaiting him from his wife, saying that she would rather return to Washington, keeping the house open and ready for him, whenever he was near, in case he really could not come to New Hampshire.

It suddenly dawned upon him that he was glad. He wired her to come at once. He was very glad. He realized that it was kind of her to be willing to come at all. He resolved that if she could forget all the years of the past he would forget one short summer. He realized that it devolved upon him, not upon her, to make amends, and he proposed to make them, but—man proposes. It is his poor prerogative.

VII

For the first time in his life Senator Roberts devoted himself to domestic problems. He secured servants, had the house unrolled from summer shrouds, an elaborate dinner prepared to await his wife's arrival and the rooms all filled with flowers. Every effort to prove to his wife that he had turned over a new leaf made him happier, more hopeful, more impatient for her to come. He reached the station half an hour before the train and wondered why he had not thought to go as far as Baltimore to meet her.

His excitement lasted to the very moment when she was stepping from the car, in her plain traveling dress, narrow white collar and tightly twisted hair. Then suddenly he thought of Strebor, and recoiled.

It was pitiful. Of course his wife noticed it. He made a valiant struggle, but his tongue seemed paralyzed.

Even his hands and feet moved stiffly and awkwardly. He forgot to help his wife into the carriage, forgot everything he would have been glad to remember and remembered everything he had intended to forget. It was a wretched ride. It seemed as though they would never reach the Circle. He knew that his face was grave and rigid as the Monument, but his lips were frozen. His eyes would not even imitate the contortions of courtesy.

The senator's wife made a heroic effort to convince herself that the flowers, the dinner, the servants meant that her husband was glad to have her back, but the weight of evidence was too strong to the contrary. By the time dinner was over she knew that barely strength remained to hold the flood in the fountains till she could reach her room, and she was trying to think how she could quickest escape, when her husband said:

"The coolest place this evening will be by the windows in the library. We'll sit there, if you don't mind."

Mechanically she took from the side table a paper which she had carried in her hand all the way from New York. The senator sat on one side of the curve and without a word she sank into a chair that seemed almost suggestively waiting, as far away as possible, on the other side.

It was a sultry summer night. The electric lights outside shimmered through the foliage, dappling with quivering sparks of dancing fire the ceiling and the walls. There were no lights within.

The senator lighted a cigar. He felt himself untwisting a little, and hoped that it would help him if he could only think of anything to say.

How could he know that his wife was as thankful for silence as he had sometimes been? He could not penetrate the shadows and see the tears that were silently falling. Suddenly she realized that she still held the paper in her hand. It was something pleasant which she had brought for him.

"The *Search-Light* was just out," she said, so softly that he did not catch the

undertone of tears. "I bought a copy in New York. It is not worth lighting up to see just now, but I can tell you about it. The full-page is called 'Welcome Home.' The mastiff is sitting up, in the centre, looking straight at one. Bleecker is the poodle, sitting on one side, and Norman, just like him, sitting on the other. Bleecker has his plume, 'I am a Democrat,' and Norman has a tag, with the quotation from his speech, 'I have always lived and hope to die a staunch Republican.' On the collar of the mastiff are the words, 'I am an American.' Some gentlemen in the car were talking about it and said that Strebor had outdone himself."

The senator cringed and crunched his cigar. Hope flew out of the window. He was in a worse state than ever. For the first time in his life he was angry with his wife. She might at least have had the courtesy to leave Strebor out of their first evening, or else have remained with him when he gave her the chance. It seemed to him an insult. He did not hear what she was saying. He only felt, with added fury, the determination to know something of the man who had gathered up his cast-off wife. He even forgot that he was speaking to that wife. Thinking of her only as one who knew the man and could enlighten him, he said roughly:

"What kind of an ass is that fellow Strebor, anyway?"

It was so sudden that for a moment his wife was dumb. Twice she began before she finished the simple reply: "Is he an ass, dear? Why do you ask?"

"Only random curiosity," the senator muttered, crushing his cigar.

A sentiment which she had never felt toward her husband before, unpleasant but timely, seemed to lift her out of herself, and she said quietly:

"Why do you ask *me*, dear?"

It was going from bad to worse. It struck the senator as subterfuge, from the woman in whom he had always placed unlimited confidence. It was too much for one already wrought and he replied:

"I supposed that having spent the summer with him you might be able to judge."

"Why do you make that statement, dear?" his wife asked instantly.

"They told me at the office of the *Search-Light* that he was spending the summer *near* Portsmouth," the senator muttered.

"Did you want to see him for anything in *particular*?" his wife asked, so quickly that, without considering, the senator replied:

"After seeing the portrait he painted I thought——"

"You saw the portrait? Did you like it, dear?"

The change was so sudden that for an instant the senator almost forgot.

"I am not a connoisseur, I——"

"Didn't you like it, dear?" The voice shook with tears, but the mastiff was deaf and blind. His teeth were set. He muttered:

"I didn't precisely admire the costume in which my wife sat for it."

The silence of the summer night absorbed them. The work was done—all done, and when the brute in man is satisfied the man in brute begins to look for sackcloth and ashes. The senator was working himself into abject contrition. His wife was solving a problem. She emerged first. Her soft voice said: "You went to find Strebor. When they told you that he was spending the summer *near* Portsmouth, you wired me that you could not come, and then—then—this? Is that it, dear?"

"Yes," muttered the senator.

A breeze rustled the leaves in the Circle, tossing the flashes of light on the ceiling. Something sounding like that old, low laugh followed it and after the laugh, from years and years gone, came that blessed: "Billy dear, it was foolish of me not to tell you when I came back from Philadelphia. But it was such a joke that I saved it for a time which did not come, when you were not too busy to listen. Billy dear, Strebor is a woman."

"A woman!"

"And an everyday kind of a woman, at that."

"Holy smoke!" said the senator. Then something else swept over him. He sprang to his feet. "Maude," he exclaimed, "forgive me. I owe you——"

"If the senator from Maganaw will permit me, he owes me nothing at all," his wife interrupted. "He has paid me the most profound of compliments. He has been jealous, and I did not suppose that he could ever care enough for me for that."

"Maude——"

"Billy dear, that's all settled now, so please sit down again. You have made me very happy. It is worth more than it cost. Now, there is a matter of national importance that I want to talk about."

"Not now, Maude—oh, not now! What is a national matter, compared with this? And not here. It's too stifling hot. I'm weak as a dead rat. I'm dripping with perspiration."

"But it's very important, Billy dear."

"Then let's go up another flight and out on that high balcony. We can get out there and sit, can't we?"

"Not tonight, Billy dear. Why, you've never been up that flight of stairs since we've lived in this house. The front room is all littered up. You could never get through it."

"After what I've just been through, Maude, do you suppose I couldn't go through litter? Come on."

"No, no, Billy; please not tonight. I'll have the room cleared tomorrow, and then you shall sit there as much as you like."

The senator sat down, remarking: "Once so well devastated, Maude, I have not even power of protest left; but fire off your national question quick, and have it over with, for I have something else to say."

"It's about the President's offer to you of the State Portfolio, Billy dear; I——"

"I say, Maude, how the deuce did you——?"

"I didn't, Billy dear. I only took

that way to find out, for fear you'd put me off some way. I knew that the present secretary would have to go. The *Search-Light* has been making it too hot for him. I fancied he might take the solitude of summertime to steal away, and I thought that if he was half wise he would go now, under the reflected glory you have just won for him. Then, of course, there was nothing the President could do but give you the appointment."

"Maude, you are too—too—too something or other. You ought to be editor of a political paper."

She laughed and added: "You haven't replied yet, for you haven't had time."

"Not to put up a show of appreciative deliberation, no. The bill is upon the table, waiting to be voted down."

"That's just what I thought, and why I came pell-mell from New Hampshire. I want it called up, at once, for debate, Billy dear. I have something to say on it."

"Nonsense, Maude!"

"Why?"

"Well, are you anxious—or able—to go into any profounder self-sacrificing economies than those which you have heroically endured for the past twelve years, simply to facilitate my gathering about myself what *éclat* may attach to the office of Secretary of State?"

"If it were only a question of economy, Billy, and even if your personal *éclat* was the only result, I'm sure I should say yes, instantly. But——"

"Well?"

"No, no; I have the floor. I haven't finished yet. In the first place, much as I long for any honor which can come to you, I am thinking, in this, only of the country which needs you. Yes, I would willingly make any sacrifice that was required. But in the second place it can all be accomplished without any sacrifice at all."

"See here, Maude, you have suffered so long and so patiently that you have grown accustomed to it, and I

have not even been man enough to appreciate it. My eyes have been opened at last, and I propose to put a stop to it. I propose to do the economizing myself for awhile, and let you take a rest. Of all things I do not propose to take a step like this on the strength of that resolution."

"Is it simply on the ground of economy?"

"That is one of twenty-five good reasons, and, being all-sufficient, the rest are unnecessary."

"That is, if there were no chance of a necessity to economize, you would accept?"

"Why, Maude, house-rent and diplomatic dinners require every cent of a secretary's salary."

"Still, you might answer my question, Billy dear. I didn't exactly want to say it. It was only—only—I was just wondering if one of the other reasons was that—that—Would you be a little ashamed of me?"

"Maude, if——"

"Please don't, Billy dear. This is just a friendly little chat, you know, on an important subject; and of course you have sometimes, with the best of reason, too, wished that I was a little more like—like——"

"The more damnable disgrace to me, Maude! Yes, I have thought it, sometimes. I have been just that cursed fool! Some day I shall tell you all about it and see if you can forgive me; some day, after I have proved to you that you'll never have cause again to suspect me of such a thought, I shall——"

"You are away from the question, Billy dear. I asked, in case there was no need of economy, if you would accept?"

"I suppose so, if you advised it, Maude. What are you coming at?"

"I'm coming at a great big mastiff, dear, and I'm a little afraid of him," the senator's wife replied; and for the first time in her life she sat on the arm of her husband's chair and leaned on his broad shoulder. "I'm coming to talk, and you must listen patiently and

not frighten me. Do you remember, years ago, we were out riding? We passed a place where three lots on a corner were to be sold at auction, and you said they would go for a song, but that some day they would be worth a gold mine?"

"Yes, I remember, and the very corner, too. And I was right. I passed the place only yesterday. The handsomest house in Washington is nearly completed on that corner lot, and the lots on either side couldn't be bought for a fortune."

"Of course you were right, Billy dear. You are always right. I had just about a little song laid by, which you did not know of, and I went up there next day and bought the lots——"

"You——?"

"Wait a moment. That isn't fair. I was saving the money to surprise you some time when you needed it. You haven't really needed it till now. But once I got the fever I kept watch for chances and bought some more lots, and a year ago I sold part of them for a small fortune, and that lovely house is all paid for and almost finished, rent free, for the next Secretary of State. Now you'll accept, won't you, Billy dear."

"Maude Roberts!"

"You'll accept, won't you, Billy dear?"

"Dear girl! Don't pin me down that way. I have something that I want to say to you."

"I know how it is. I've felt that way many a time. But this is important business and we must forget other things and discuss it on its merits."

"On its merits, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. It would cost a fortune to furnish that house and another to run it. A secretary's salary would go and you would be grubbing just the same in those plain bodices and narrow white collars. We'll rent that house to some other secretary who can afford it, and we'll see you shine the way you ought to, on the receipts."

"Oh, dear! I wish that you were not quite so scrutinizingly observant.

I never thought you cared. But about the house—why, there are Government bonds waiting for you in the safety vault, enough to furnish that house over and over and over, and then beg for more worlds to conquer. Now you'll accept, won't you?"

Senator Roberts's arm had found its way about a trembling waist, and he was drawing his wife closer and closer as he said solemnly:

"I've spent the most of my life, Maude, in blindly accepting situations. But really, if you don't mind, I'd like a little more light on this one."

"Then strike a match, Billy dear. One match will give you quite sufficient light. I'll have everything ready right here."

The senator lighted a match with grave deliberation, and, as the flame shone clear, a trembling finger pointed to a line under the business heading of the *Search-Light*. He read aloud, "M. Strebor, Editor."

"Spell the name backward, Billy dear," the soft voice said.

He spelled it backward and—the match went out.

VIII

LONG later—a lifetime of supernal bliss later—one little arm unwound from about the senator's neck, and lips close to his own whispered:

"Billy dear?"

"Maude darling?"

"I only thought perhaps you were asleep, Billy. I wanted to remind you that you couldn't speak against it, for you said yourself, a little while ago, that I ought to be editor of a political paper. I was afraid, you know, that someone would crowd me off that cartoon page; and sometimes, when you got to talking about it, you sent cold shivers down my back for fear that the policy of the paper would change. So all these years I've been buying the stock, just as fast as I could get it. It's a better paying investment, Billy dear, than even corner lots in Washington. But wasn't I a nervous wreck col-

lecting it—especially when I had almost enough! And wasn't I relieved, just after you sailed for England, when I managed to secure the controlling share, and the policy of the paper was forever ours!"

"How many are there in the secret with you, Maude?" the senator asked, and the low laugh sounded, before the reply:

"Not one living soul but you. The hardest of it all has been the plots and plans I've had to devise to keep it all dark. And I did want to tell you so, when some friends of Senator Slocum's offered Strebor fifty thousand dollars to turn on you and brace him up. But there's not a mortal on the paper, even, who is not just as sure as you were that Strebor is a man. And the best of it all is that you were jealous of him, dear. No, the editors all think he is too busy with his art to come to them, and the artists think he is too busy with his paper."

"But how did you come to paint that portrait of yourself, darling?" the senator asked; and the strong hand drew her still closer, till she had left the arm of the chair altogether.

"Just in mirrors, dear, upstairs. It's my work-room and studio. That's why I didn't dare to have you see it. Going to Philadelphia was only an ex-

cuse to get away from the White House ball. I——"

"Yes, yes, Maude darling! Don't tell me about that. I know, now. I know so much that I never knew before, and, best of all, I know how all these years I've been a fiendish——"

"Stop, Billy!" And a kiss enforced it. Then he said:

"What I mean about the portrait is how came you to think of the beautiful pose?"

"I'll tell you, truly, Billy dear, but maybe you'll think less of me; for you are a man, you know, and I'm only a woman."

"It was long years ago—nothing that you can remember. It was just after we were married—the only time in my life when I believed, just for one little minute, that you almost really loved me, dear—more than respected me, you know; but oh! so much more to a woman. Once when you saw me like that, you came up and kissed me when you didn't have to, you know, just as though you really loved me. And—and—one day, when I seemed to be losing you more and more, the thought came to me that maybe—maybe——"

"Oh, I've always longed so to have you love me, and have you kiss me times when you didn't have to, you know!"



THE ROSE AND THE STAR

WHY is the rose so gay in its filmy beauty clad,
And why is the star of eve alway, in the cloudless west, so sad?
The rose lives only for a day, and at dark in the dust it lies,
While the star shines still o'er river and hill, a joy to mortal eyes—
Why, I say, is the rose so gay, and the evening star never glad?
The voice of the wind I caught, o'er a shattered rose it blew,
And I know its words, as it wandered by, in the garden old were true.

"The rose is gay, though brief its breath,
Because it ne'er hath looked on death;

But the evening star on high—

Why should it not be sad? Alas,

It hath watched a million summers pass,

Like beautiful visions over a glass,

And—a myriad roses die!"

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

THE TWO GHOSTS

By Richard Le Gallienne

TWO people who had once loved—or thought they loved—had been dead and buried for three years—that is, to each other. To the rest of the world they seemed vigorously and even gaily above ground, and, at all events, had retained sufficient life in them to get engaged to be married to two other people.

The man, it should be explained, was already engaged when he first met the woman, and had never, during the whole course of his relations with her, the smallest intention of breaking his engagement. But the woman did not know that—and there is, of course, no possible justification for his wicked Don Juan-like attitude, except that, as boys will be boys, men will be men.

Now it chanced that one spring afternoon, when these three years had gone by, the ghosts of these two lovers met in a New York drawing-room, and were both very much disturbed at the sight of each other. Nothing upsets a ghost so much as the apparition of another ghost. Though they were both clever ghosts, they were unable to conceal from each other their excitement at meeting, and, indeed, less able to conceal it from the eyes of the lookers-on, who, knowing something of their story when they had been alive, were hardly less excited than themselves.

"The two ghosts have met," went a whisper round the room. "What is going to happen?"

Meanwhile the two ghosts were looking at each other, without saying a word.

Presently, "Is it you?" "Is it

you?" they said together; and each answered, "It is I."

"Let us draw away from the others and look at each other," said the two ghosts, and they found a corner apart from the inquisitive eyes, and looked and looked at each other, and never said a word; till at last the time came when the woman-ghost must go and meet the man to whom she was engaged up there in the real world, and with whom she dined every evening—as, it is well known, is the custom of all engaged couples!

"This cannot be our last meeting," said the two ghosts. "There is so much to say."

"I will meet you in the same dear spot at three tomorrow," said the woman-ghost, and thereupon she vanished; and the man-ghost smiled.

The same dear spot was a certain café full of quiet corners, where in the days when they were alive the two ghosts had been wont to drink through straws to the eternity of their love for each other.

Remembering each other's habits, both ghosts were late, the man half an hour, the woman forty minutes.

"What shall we drink?" said the man-ghost.

"You know," answered the woman-ghost.

The waiter, who was an old friend, was quite startled to see them.

"Why, I thought you were dead!" he exclaimed.

"We have been," said the woman-ghost, looking fondly at the man-ghost and surreptitiously pressing his hand.

The waiter didn't, of course, understand, so, to relieve his embarrassment—with that extraordinary memory for the tastes of their customers which good waiters possess—"Shall I bring you the same as in the old days?" he asked, with a fatherly smile on their re-arisen happiness.

"Do you really remember?" asked the woman-ghost.

"You shall see, miss," answered the waiter, and presently returned with the sacramental drink he had made for them so often three years ago.

"Fancy you remembering—how dear of you, John!" said the woman-ghost. "Why, I believe he is quite happy to see us again," she added, when he had left them alone.

"The whole world is happy with us," said the man-ghost; "the very cars outside seem to be singing a happy song. And they have sounded so lonely for ever so long—such a sad, lost moaning they made. Do you remember our old spring song?"

"Oh, the gay, gay people
Out in the sun, in the sun,
For today the winter is ended,
Today the spring is begun."

"And the open cars are running,
And the brooks are running, too,
And there's a bird, dear, singing,
Singing all of you."

"I love you," said the woman-ghost, laying her hand on his.

"How dear of you to say it first again—as you did long ago," laughed the man-ghost, perhaps a little ambiguously.

Then they took up their straws.

"Who are we to drink to?" asked the man-ghost.

"Us!" answered the woman-ghost.

"Us!" said the man-ghost.

And then with their eyes upon each other they drank through the straws.

They had a very great deal to say to each other, many things out of the past to explain, many old misunderstandings to discuss. They had, despite their great love, lied no little to each other in the old days—the man, perforce, because, as I have said, he loved another

woman, too, and loved her most; the woman for no particular reason except that she was *intrigante* by nature, and couldn't help it. Both had found the other out, the man the woman's little mean lies, the woman the man's great big lies. And so they had become ghosts to each other. Yet they had both cared a great deal, both had suffered, and both were happy to forget each other's faults for the purpose of spending a few hours together in a fool's paradise.

"Ah! but I have changed so much since then!" said the woman-ghost. "The little lies have fallen from me. I see now how right you were about me. If only I had known then—but I was little more than a child. . . ."

"Yes!" said the man-ghost wickedly in his own heart. "It is true—you were but twenty-eight. . . ."

This was, no doubt, a little mean of the man-ghost—but then, if only the reader could know all, he would understand.

"You have changed, too," said the woman-ghost presently. "Your mouth is kinder. You, too, I can see, have grown truer, more sincere. . . ."

The man-ghost did his best to look like a reformed character, and pressed her hand impressively. He said nothing, but his whole attitude was designed to convey that, indeed, life had at last purged the dross out of him and taught him the long lesson of the One Woman. As a matter of fact it had, but it was by means of another woman that he had learned it, the woman whom he had always loved—but deceived awhile. He was not deceiving her now, for he had told her of his having met the ghost and the likelihood of his meeting her again. She was so secure in his love that she smiled at his vagaries and left him to go his way. Wise women are not wastefully jealous. They keep their jealousy for really important occasions.

Both ghosts were very delicate to avoid mention of the *status quo*, though by every indirect method of which their subtle brains were capable they sought to read each other's minds

on the subject—with but little result. The woman-ghost, however, was intuitively aware of a certain stubborn loyalty to the other woman in the man-ghost's carefully chosen words and nimble evasions.

Thus, in retrospective readjustments, stealthy reconnaissances of each other, and withal real joy in each other's recovered presence, the afternoon went by, and presently once more the time approached for the woman-ghost to dine in the real world.

"We cannot part like this," said the two ghosts; "there is so much still to say."

So it was agreed that they should meet again on the morrow, at the same place, at the same hour.

"You had better not come out with me," said the woman-ghost at parting, for ghosts have a great objection to being seen together; so the man-ghost remained behind, and watched her figure through the window, and wondered if he could ever really love her again as he used to do.

Next day the two ghosts were comparatively punctual at the rendezvous. The woman-ghost was twenty minutes late and the man-ghost twenty-five. Again they drank to "Us" through the sacramental straws, again their friend the waiter beamed upon their resurrection, again they talked of the past and tried in vain to wrest from each other the secret of the present, and again they were very happy, and again when the time came round for the engaged couple to dine together nothing seemed to have been said.

So once more it was "Tomorrow—at three"; and the man-ghost watched the woman-ghost through the window, and wondered. But he admired her frock.

Thus many days went by, and the two ghosts continued meeting each other according to their notions of three o'clock; and so much a custom had their meetings become that they had almost forgotten that they were ghosts at all; and certainly anyone seeing them together, seeing their close colloquies and the way their eyes hung

upon each other, would have had considerable difficulty in distinguishing them from real lovers. Each day the living blood seemed to be pouring into their shrunken veins, each day they grew less and less like phantoms.

There is no real ghost, I need hardly say, that does not own and haunt some buried treasure. Now both these ghosts possessed their buried treasure—treasure which three years ago they had professed to destroy. One day they had dared to ask each other concerning it.

"You did not really burn them?" said the man-ghost.

"No, I could not bear to, and never meant to; did you?"

And the man-ghost said the same as the woman-ghost. And both told the truth. For, in their way, they had loved each other.

"Oh, come and see my buried treasure!" said the woman-ghost, as the time came for parting.

"But . . ." the eyes of the man-ghost queried, "what of the dinner hour in the real world?"

As it chanced the woman-ghost was free this night; and as, day by day, the woman-ghost had been growing more and more daring, they drove in a cab together, the two ghosts, to the place of the buried treasure—trusting perhaps also to the alleged invisibility of ghosts.

To drive in a cab again together was for them a separate bliss—poor, disembodied spirits; and then at length they found themselves at the entrance of the apartment house at which in his carnal life the man-ghost had been so accustomed a presence. It was but natural that he should re-enter these once familiar doors with a thrill of memory. How strange it was to be there again, to find everything the same, the same clerks at the desk, as she went there to inquire for her mail. . . . Yes! it was strange, and almost creepy, even for a ghost. When they came to the elevator there was the same good boy David running it who had been so kind—in exchange for dollar bills—in the old times. The

good David almost fainted at the sight of the man-ghost.

"Why! I thought, sir . . ." he began, and stopped in time.

When they were out of the elevator the woman-ghost explained that David having so often inquired after the gentleman that came no more, she had calmly told him that the gentleman was dead. Hence David's natural surprise.

"It was true, wasn't it?" she added.

"Ye-es," answered the man-ghost, with an inward reflection on that old habit of unveracity.

Then they entered the rooms he had once loved so well—entered them by the same door!—the rooms that had once seemed like the shrine of some pure spirit, the dwelling-place of a fairy-woman. The same rooms, the same furniture; a few more books, a few more photographs, the desk three years untidier—that was the only difference.

When they had closed the door they stood a moment side by side looking at the place where they had both seemed so magically alive. Then they fell into each other's arms and kissed each other, and kissed each other again and again, and, although they were ghosts and engaged ghosts, too, the kisses seemed wonderfully real, and anyone who could have seen them might well have wished to be a ghost—so happy they seemed revisiting thus the glimpses of the moon in each other's company.

Neither of them could believe that they were there—together; yet in a moment the three years seemed to have vanished for both of them—though deep in their hearts they knew they were only ghosts. Still, the sensation was very sweet of seeming to be really alive again together, and who shall blame them if they gave themselves up to it?

After awhile the woman-ghost said: "Come, let us look at our buried treasure," and she turned to a little urn-shaped box of seventeenth century workmanship, made of wood covered with decorative shapes of beaten cop-

per, and a fantastic lock of iron big enough to belong to the gate of a castle.

"I have two keys to this," she said; "here is one of them. Take it and open the box for us, and then keep the key forever. Here is my own key. No one so long as I live shall look inside this box but you and I. It belongs to us. It is our year. No future has any right over it. . . ."

Then they placed the box between them on a divan, and the man-ghost set the key to the lock and raised the lid, and the two looked in as into a grave—a grave filled with rose leaves; and, as the man-ghost looked, the tears came into his eyes, and he took the woman-ghost's face in his hands and kissed her very gently, and then they fell into each other's arms over the little grave and cried bitterly.

And anyone looking on would have said that this was the real sorrow of real people. But neither forgot in their hearts that they were ghosts.

When they had recovered themselves, and were drying their eyes and trying to laugh away their foolishness, the man-ghost said:

"You make me believe that you did really love me, after all. . . ."

"I loved you all the time," she answered. "It was you that failed."

Then she took up a folded paper from one of the little trays. It made a withered sound when she opened it.

"Do you remember the goldenrod along the road—that morning? Here is a piece of it."

And again she took a folded paper and opened it.

"Do you remember," she said, "that old desk you used to write on? Once, when you were not looking, I took a penknife and cut away a splinter of it. Here it is."

Can you wonder that the man-ghost felt his heart fill with tears?

"Did you really love me so much as that?" he said. "How grateful you make me—how happy!"

And then, one by one, the woman-ghost showed him the hoarded treasures of her heart. It was all too sacred to tell about; but there was nothing

that bore the stamp of a moment's memory, however slight, that the woman had not saved, trifles inconceivably trivial, as well as little intimate memorials heartbreakingly intimate. The man-ghost almost forgot the personal relation of it all to himself in his reverence at this revelation of a woman's heart.

"To think," he kept saying over and over, "to think that you loved me like that—and I never knew! How can I ever be grateful enough for this wonderful love that you gave me?"

So, for a long while the two ghosts hung over their buried treasure, and at length placed each little memory back in its place, locked the urn-shaped box, and with a sigh the man-ghost placed his key in his pocket, and the woman-ghost slipped hers into her bosom—and by this the clocks were striking eleven.

"I must go," said the man-ghost, rising, but he lingered still a moment while the woman-ghost held him in her arms and kissed him passionately. When they came out of their kiss, breathless and laughing, the woman-ghost said:

"I am afraid this hardly looks as though we were ghosts."

Yet for all that both knew that they were ghosts.

As the man-ghost walked home, with a curious gravity in his heart, he suddenly thought of one incident of the evening, the significance of which had not struck him at the time. While they were looking over those memories in the little chest, the woman-ghost had held up a piece of paper on which were written some verses.

"Do you remember this?" she asked.

He remembered well. "But where," he added, "is the letter that came with it? You seem to have torn it off," and he pointed to the top of the paper which had evidently been cut with a pair of scissors.

"Oh, that is down there among the other letters," she answered. "I wanted to have the poem by itself."

It was a slight incident, and at the moment he had given it no thought; but, as he walked home, his memory went back to it and suddenly recalled

what the letter had been which accompanied the verses. It had been a very tender letter, memorial of an occasion very sacred to both of them; but it had been for that very reason the kind of letter one would not care to see in an auction-room or an autograph dealer's catalogue. Therefore the woman-ghost had—destroyed it. Perhaps not unnaturally, but why had she not said so? Why had she said it was there with the other letters?

And so once more that shadow of unveracity stole over the man-ghost's thoughts and vitiated the sincerity of that afternoon.

For all these meetings the two ghosts still felt that they had more to say to each other, so still they continued meeting, and still each evening the woman-ghost returned to dinner in the real world. And so the beautiful days went by.

One day as they sat together in their café the woman-ghost said:

"Do you remember what day Monday will be?"

"The eighteenth of April," answered the man-ghost promptly. So much indeed the waiter could have told him, but as men-ghosts have exceedingly bad memories for anniversaries, he immediately set to work trying to recall the significance of the eighteenth of April.

"Yes! but you remember what it means—what it once meant?"

"Do you really think that I could possibly forget?" answered the man-ghost, with a certain reverential reticence of manner, as though, while the occasion was perfectly clear in his mind, it was one almost too sacred to recall in words. By such dumb show of feeling he succeeded in convincing the woman-ghost that the date was indeed green in his memory; the more so as she herself had her own reasons for not putting the date into words.

"Do you think we might spend the day in the country, as we did three years ago?" said the woman-ghost. "It would be doing no wrong to—anybody, would it?"

"Of course it wouldn't. Ghosts can-

not harm the living," said the man-ghost; "the worst they can do is to haunt them. Let us go."

"The spring is early this year," said the woman-ghost; "one feels it breathing already in the town. Even here the buds are thickening on the trees; but the country must already be leaf and blossom and birds."

"Let us go and teach the birds to sing," said the man-ghost.

"We might even teach them to fly," said the woman-ghost, laughing over the two straws daintily held in her lips, like pipes of some frail forgotten music.

"Oh, winter of my heart—when comes the spring . . ."

the man-ghost began to recite in a low voice, half to himself—

"I am sore weary of these death-like days,
This shroud unheaving of eternal snow—
Oh, winter of my heart—when comes the spring!"

"Who did you write that to?" asked the woman-ghost jealously. "It was not to me. . . ."

"No, it was not to you, dear ghost," smiled the man-ghost; "it was to a living woman."

"Don't think of the living today," said the woman-ghost. "It is ungallant, at the very least."

"You are right," answered the other; "it was but a passing thought, and it is past. Now, dear ghost, I am your own ghost again. . . ."

"I wonder if you really love me?" asked the woman-ghost.

"As much as one ghost can love another ghost," the man-ghost answered.

And then, looking at the clock, they saw that it was already the hour of the betrothed.

"Before you go, tell me in return if you really love me?" asked the man-ghost.

"As much as a living woman can love a ghost," she answered half sadly, half laughingly, and her skirts rustled away to leave the man-ghost pondering on the enigmatic reply. Suppose he should cease to be a ghost! Suppose she were really a living woman!

He watched her through the café

window as she caught the car. One thing was certain—her new spring hat was quite pretty.

On the morning of the eighteenth of April the two ghosts met very early at their café, and, after first drinking through the straws very solemnly to the anniversary they were about to celebrate—which, shame upon him! the man-ghost had in vain tried to place—they discussed their plans for the day.

"Shall we go—there?" said the woman-ghost.

The word "there" only deepened the mystery for the man-ghost, but he was able to say an appropriate thing.

"Do you think we dare?" he asked. "It is always such a terrible risk revisiting places where one has been so happy."

"Do you think we shall run any risk today?" asked the woman, looking at once fondly and searchingly into his face.

For answer the man-ghost looked at her a long, long look, and presently asked the waiter to order a hansom to take them to the Grand Central. He could remember the Grand Central—but what on earth was the name of the other station! For, you see, they had been so often into the country together, so often that New York State made a kind of Palestine, sown thick for them with holy places. But which was the holy place connected with April the eighteenth? All the way in the cab the man-ghost was cudgeling his brains for the name of the place, but at length they arrived at the depot without his having been able to recall it. As he handed the woman-ghost out of the hansom a desperate expedient occurred to him.

"I have just remembered a telegram I must send," he said; "do you mind getting the tickets while I send it?" and he pressed some money into her hand.

She went off gaily, poor little woman-ghost, and the man-ghost felt the awful wretch that he was—but is it the fault of man that he was not born with a woman's memory for anniversaries?

Presently they met again. She

handed him the tickets, and how eagerly he read them! Now, at all events, he knew the name of the station, but as they had been there together at least six times he was still at a loss as to which visit they were about to celebrate. However, that was a mere detail, now that he knew the name of the place; and so they started off, happy as birds—for perhaps the deepest bond between them had always been their mutual love for what is usually called “nature,” a love peculiarly their own. They both knew others who loved “nature,” but no one quite as they loved it. The purest hours of companionship they had ever known had been out together in the fields and woods; and to be once more in the country together with the perilous intoxication of spring all around them, the vivid fountains of green leaves, piercingly fresh, the balm in the air, and oh, the birds!—was a happiness that made them forget awhile that they were only ghosts. So might two lost spirits escaped awhile from Hades into the upper air scent the sweet earth-smell of the mold, fill their arms with fragrant boughs and passionately feed their eyes on the good sky.

“It is good to be here,” said the man-ghost; “let us build two tabernacles!”

“Two!” laughed the woman-ghost.

And, as by this time they were in the ungossipping wilderness, they took hands and ran together over the rocky meadows, for sheer joy in being there together under the sky.

At last they found the very meadow, the very rocks, overshadowed by the very trees, where they had been so happy that eighteenth of April. A stream had been running close by three years before. It was running still. All was just the same. And here they were once more, to complete the punctuality of nature. Only one object was missing from the landscape—a poor old consumptive horse that had neighed mournfully—and sometimes startlingly—far down the meadow on the eighteenth of April, three years ago.

It was the woman-ghost recalling this old horse that suddenly brought back to the man-ghost's mind the whole set of circumstances which beforehand he had been in vain trying to piece together. At last the anniversary was clear to him, and he could enter into its memorial rites without the sense of hypocrisy or the fear of some disastrous blunder.

And, even with a defective memory for sentiment, it surely had been strange if the man-ghost had not responded to the vernal call of resurrection which breathed and piped and fluted and rippled all about them. The whole sunlit world was rising from the dead—might not these two dead ones arise also, and once again be happy together in the sun? All too soon they must die the second death, from which there is no resurrection. Surely this day in the sun might be theirs, the last day they would ever spend in the spring sunshine together. Was it so very much to ask—so very much to steal?

The two ghosts sat side by side on a ledge of rock high up over the world. A great tree overshadowed them, and it was very cozy. Looking down they could see all the colored spring: farmhouses smothered in blossom, plowed fields already vivid with the ascending blade, nooks and corners of meadow embroidered with flowers.

“It looks almost as if it might be the spring,” said the man sadly, “the last spring.”

“The last?” queried the woman-ghost.

“I mean together,” answered the man, not with entire satisfaction to the woman-ghost.

Actually the man-ghost had made beautiful arrangements for all the springs that remained for him. He intended to spend them with the One Woman. But the occasion demanded a certain picturesque pessimism, and he lived up to the occasion.

“I think,” presently said the woman-ghost, who loved nothing so much as a literary allusion, “that Persephone

must have felt as I do now when she arose each year from the shades. How sweet to breathe again the smell of green leaves and the newly turned mold! How sweet to breathe it with you!"

"Properly speaking," the man-ghost answered slyly, "you oughtn't to be breathing it with me; I mean, of course, in your character of Persephone. You should be breathing it with your mother, Ceres."

"I love you even more than my mother," said the woman-ghost, smiling.

"Your learned allusion," said the man-ghost presently, "reminds me of something I forgot to say the other day when we opened that treasure-chest together. It was obvious enough, of course, and hardly worth mentioning. Indeed, I'm sure you thought of it yourself—thought, I mean, of the famous box of Pandora."

"Of course I did; but shall I tell you what I chiefly thought of?"

"Do."

"That, after all the superficial trouble occasioned by the opening of the box, after all the various plagues and vexations and dilemmas had made their escape, there was still Hope lying at the bottom of the box."

In reply the man-ghost pressed the woman-ghost's hand and looked a long look into her face, which was his way of saying everything, yet saying nothing; and the woman-ghost, who it must have been gathered was no fool, was far from being deceived by this code method of saying nothing. She began to understand.

"I am hungry," she said presently; "suppose we open this Pandora's basket."

They had brought with them a little luncheon-basket packed with dainties, and they laughingly unpacked it together.

"There is, you see, Hope at the bottom of the box," said the man-ghost, lifting out a silver flask of considerable dimensions, which the

woman-ghost had given him as a birthday present three years before. "See how faithful I am to you! Wherever I go this goes with me."

"Faithful creature indeed!" laughed the woman-ghost. "I am so glad I chose something useful."

They had no straws with them, so perforce they drank out of that flask together, as indeed they had drunk three years before. Then they turned to the various dainties, and ate heartily and laughed together, and grew happier and happier each hour.

After they had been sitting together in silence for a long time the woman-ghost said:

"Do you remember the day of the marguerites?"

That day the man-ghost did in very truth remember.

"Do you remember the day of the tower?"

That also he remembered.

"Do you remember the poem you wrote me about those two days?"

"I remember that I wrote a poem, but I cannot remember the poem."

"I can," said the woman-ghost, leaning against his shoulder. "Would you like me to say it to you?"

And then the woman-ghost recited as follows:

"Of all the days we said that day was good,
When, 'neath the blue publicity of heaven,
Amid the flickering marguerites we stood,
And gave—or thought we gave—what
once is given

And only once is taken quite away.

But, child, since then how rich the months
that passed
With child-glad hours and many a perfect
day,

Nor maybe yet the happiest or the last.

"Yet, love, I wonder if the day we went
Up that high tower, and stood up in the
sky,

Yet unto earth returned again, was meant
To symbolize our love; nay, even I,
In a dim-lighted, unbelieving hour,
Have wondered if we really climbed the
tower!

"You were right," she added, "we never climbed the tower." And after a pause she whispered, "Is it yet too late?"

The man-ghost shook his head sadly. "Who knows?" he said.

"What are we to do?" said the woman-ghost, holding him more tightly in her arms.

"Time will show us what to do," answered the man-ghost evasively.

"I believe in that no longer," she answered; "it is for us to tell Time what to do."

"It will all come right," said the man-ghost cheerfully.

"I have ceased to believe in things coming right," said the woman-ghost, "unless we make them come right."

At that moment the man-ghost, noticing that the sky was becoming overshadowed with the approaching night, involuntarily took out his watch. It was later than he thought.

"My dear," he said thoughtlessly, "I am sorry, but we must go at once or we shall miss your train."

"I care nothing about trains, I care for nothing," the woman-ghost answered. "I love you only. I would rather miss my train than catch it. . . ."

For answer the man-ghost took the silver flask by the bottom and held it with the neck downward. It was empty.

"Dear little ghost," he said, "I understand. It has been a wonderful spring day. The spring has turned our

heads—but it mustn't turn our hearts. You must catch your train."

In explanation of the conclusion I must add that a ghost, however much it may love another ghost, is anxious above all things to be alive again, alive particularly in the social world. This it can only become by attaching itself to some living person who will give it a simple, undivided love. Now both these ghosts with which this story has dealt alike felt the need of such revivification. The man-ghost, as I have said, had never really been a ghost, for all the time another living woman had been feeding him with her heart's blood. That was why the woman-ghost, when she first met him again, took him for a living man—and hoped to live again through him. And a living man indeed he was for everyone else but her. For her only he was still a ghost.

Therefore, when she came to think over it, she was thankful that he had made her catch her train and so arrive on time for dinner with her betrothed.

As for the man-ghost he went back to the living woman; and she looked up at him and laughed.

"Well, how about the great anniversary?" she said.

"We are finished," he said, laughing. "We have died the second death. The ghosts have laid each other!"



PAYMENT

FOR hope we pay our wits, for joy our souls,
For peace earth's treasure trove;
But all the goods of life seem trivial tolls
For one small hour of love.

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN.



UNDOUBTEDLY

MEDIUM—I see four husbands ahead of you.
ACTRESS—You must be looking backward.

THE MUSIC-ROOM

THROUGH the vast purple curtains' fold and fall
 No sunbeam ever pierces to the room
 Where giant bronzes brood like dreams of doom
 In the deep glow from crimson tapers tall.

Most delicate and most fantastical,
 The ministers of music touch the gloom
 With gleam of wood, and ivory's paler bloom,
 And the dim organ looms above them all.

Silent—but palpitating still with tone,
 And fiery-freighted harmonies that roll
 Through dusk of strange delights and sombre sins;
 Occult confessional, that hears alone,
 The moaning of the organ's troubled soul,
 The wailing of the haunted violins.

FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.



CONVENIENT

FIRST FRIEND—Did you have anything to eat while you were in your auto?
 SECOND FRIEND—Oh, yes. They had a good restaurant just off the
 repair-shop.



VERY LIKELY

SHE—The half is never told.

HE—No, but the fraction that does become public property is always
 magnified adequately to make up for the whole.



CANDID

MOLLIE—I wouldn't marry the best man in the world.

KITTIE—I think myself you'd be happier with the other sort.

THE CHAMPION GOES HOME

By Harold R. Durant

THE little boy was awfully lonely. His mother had held him in her arms a long, long time. Even now he could almost feel her trembling fingers in his black curls, and her last words still sounded in his ears—and that was hours ago.

"Mother is all tired out, sonny," she whispered, "and she's going where she won't have to work so hard. She doesn't want to leave her little boy, but she can't help it. You'll be a good boy, won't you, Tommy? Grow up to be a fine, strong man, and—oh, sonny! be more of a man than your father."

The women in the huge tenement block had soothed him as best they could when the men had carried his mother away in the big, black wagon, but now as he sat on the curbstone he began to miss her. Rosalsky had taken the furniture for rent, and another family had moved into the two rooms. He had no home. His only asset was a gold locket which contained his mother's picture. He took it from his pocket and opened it. She must have been an awfully pretty lady then. He dug a grimy fist into one eye to keep back the tears, and scowled at Paddy Sullivan, who sat astride a fire hydrant across the street watching Tommy with evident envy. Paddy had never had a death in his family, and he felt slighted. Tommy pushed his bare feet along the gutter and the mud oozed between his toes with a warm, comfortable feeling. He stole a glance at the boy on the iron perch. Paddy's constant admiration was having its effect. There weren't many eight-year-old boys in the ward as important as he, and—"Hully gee!" he had just thought of the big silver dol-

lar in his pocket which the kind-hearted Mrs. Maher had given him. Why, he was rich! He gave his head a backward jerk and the alert Paddy crossed over in ready response.

"Where'd yer pinch de buck?" asked Paddy in wide-eyed wonderment as he saw the money.

"Oh, no matter," replied Tommy loftily; "it's mine."

"Let's get some papas," cried Paddy, with an eye to business. "We kin make a wad of dough on wuxtras."

Tommy shook his head negatively. His inscrutable face relaxed sufficiently to allow his lips to pucker after the manner of a wise capitalist, and then the healthy animal asserted itself.

"T'ell with that," he said unblushingly; "a plate of 'beef an'' 'll do fer mine. Come on!"

Tommy's mother had never been able to make him eschew profanity, but she had eliminated the "dis" and "dat" from his East Side vocabulary. They gorged themselves with "beef an'," and then wandered along the busy thoroughfare. Paddy stopped before several shop windows where confections and toys were displayed, but his "Oh's" and his "Gee's" were not hints strong enough to make Tommy treat him further. Paddy became suspicious and then disgusted.

"Ain't yer goin' t' blow t' somethin' more?" he finally demanded.

"If you ain't gettin' used right you know what you kin do," replied Tommy, bristling belligerently.

"Ah, ye're a cheap guy, a reg'lar shine," snorted the ungrateful Paddy, and without more ado he turned and left him.

Tommy continued on his way, un-

ruffled and serene. The jingle of the money in his pocket was sweet music to his ears, and his full stomach had reduced him to a state of unalloyed contentment. Why shouldn't he be happy? The warm September sun was everywhere and he needn't go home. Home! And then he realized there was no home for him now—that the one who always called him "sonny" was somewhere in a big, black wagon. He swallowed hard to keep back the tears and spent a nickel for a "hot dog" with the "Guinny" on the corner. The mustard always made one's eyes water and then nobody could say he had been crying—just like a kid.

The brave little chap fought out his hard battle alone, but youth finally triumphed over memory and gradually he became himself again. He made a flying jump on a rear platform of an uptown surface car with the agility of a monkey, and when the conductor made a move toward him he fooled that official by tendering his fare. He rode until he received his first glimpse of the country; in fact, he rode so far that it was quite dark when he returned to more familiar scenes. He didn't think of the big, black wagon so often now. He could tell it was late by the number of "jags" who lurched by him. They never got drunk early. He was tired and wondered where he could sleep. He knew he could get a bed for ten cents, but then if he sought the lodging-houses the Society agent would take him and keep him locked up until he was a man. Once when he had torn his trousers in a fight with Dinny Cosgrove, and had been afraid to go home, he had slept all night on the shed back of Cassidy's barn. The very place! He sneaked along the alley, climbed on top of the big canvas-covered furniture van, and from thence to the shed was an easy matter.

He was bounced up and down rudely several times before he realized that the big iron window-shutter on the barn above the shed was open and that men were jumping out of the

window to the shed with flying leaps, then dropping to the yard and disappearing silently in the darkness. The human exodus ceased, and a man appeared at the window and stood looking out. From behind him streamed a bright light, and in its glare Tommy could see that his hair was red, much redder than "Carrot" Coogan's.

"I'd like to lay me hands on de sucker what made dat phony squeal!" muttered the man. "Nothin' doin', Mike," he called out. "Not a cop around. Why, what th'—?"

He had espied Tommy below him all huddled in a frightened heap. "Watcher doin' here, kid?" he asked not unkindly. "Let's look at yer."

Tommy rose obediently. "I wasn't doin' nothin', mister," said the boy. "The bunch come 'hop-scochin'' out the winder where I was sleepin'."

"Why didn't yer go home?"

"I ain't got any."

"What!"

"My mother's dead and I ain't got no father."

The man reached down and drew Tommy up beside him.

"Well, yer little piker, I guess 'Red' Kelly kin find a place fer yer," he said, as he smiled down at the boy. The waif had met a friend. Tommy gazed about him in open-mouthed amazement. In the centre of the big loft stood a ring made of ropes, and from above four large lamps shed a bright light on the floor. Around the ring were a lot of chairs and benches, and near the door half a dozen men were congregated. Kelly explained the boy's presence, and then added: "There's no cops, an' I say let de scrap go on. De gang's gone, but we kin finish it fer de side bet."

Apparently this was agreeable, and Tommy saw two men begin to take off their clothes. Ah, now he knew! It was a prize-fight. Kelly assisted one of the men in putting on the boxing-gloves and began to whisper in his ear. Tommy squatted on a bench behind Kelly's corner, and when the latter happened to glance at the boy he was

dumfounded by the change in the youngster's appearance. Instead of a child's inscrutable face he beheld the ferocious countenance of a little savage. The boy's eyes had narrowed to two small slits, and his whole expression was one of such supreme pugnacity that the veteran of the ring pondered over it.

Of the fight that followed Tommy afterward retained only a dim recollection; but one thing impressed him strongly. It was the way in which Kelly's man kept after his opponent, and that he never forgot. He saw the blood come in each round, saw them knock each other down frequently and witnessed the men as they silently punched each other about through round after round, but he never tired of the brutal scene.

Once he heard Kelly say to his man, "Thirty-first comin', Jack," and the fighter replied, "I don't care—I kin stay fer a week," and on it went. Soon Kelly's man began to knock the other down more often, and finally he lay still. The man in the ring who wore clothes raised his arm and lowered it several times over the man who lay on his back. Kelly's man sat on his chair. The man who had waved his arm came over and gave Kelly a roll of money, and then Kelly took him home.

"Red" Kelly never regretted the fact that he gave Tommy Dunnigan a home. He sent him to school until he was fourteen and then began his boxing lessons. Step by step he taught him all he knew, and none knew more about the manly art than Kelly. The boy was a ready pupil and grasped the peculiar science of "hit, stop and get away" with wonderful aptitude. Kelly suffered one disappointment when he was forced to realize that Tommy would always be small. He had hopes that his protégé would grow into a lightweight at least; but when Tommy was sixteen years old he barely scaled one hundred pounds.

About this time the Legislature passed a law regulating boxing, and the

private prize-fights to a finish were superseded by the limited-round contests, and New York City became the Mecca of fighters. "Red" Kelly immediately came into his own and rolled comfortably along on the top wave of pugilistic prosperity. He had a lucrative "stable," but as he himself well expressed the situation, "Tommy is me best meal-ticket."

Tommy punched his way to victory through all the boys in his class, and when he was seventeen years old he wore the gold medal which was emblematic of the A. A. U. bantam-weight championship.

There were boys as clever as he, and some more so, but none of them could equal him in unrelenting aggressiveness. He was at his opponent from the clang of the bell, and never let up until his adversary was badly beaten or knocked out. Old-timers marveled at his viciousness in the ring, but they never knew of his first lesson in Cassidy's barn.

Tommy made his professional debut and then for a year fought regularly with unqualified success. The managers of the Broadway Athletic Club, before which all of the champions fought, finally offered Kelly a match for him.

He was informed that Willie Herman, the bantam champion, would give Dunnigan a match, provided Kelly would make a side bet of five thousand dollars. Herman had held the championship for several years and was considered invincible. He was making preparations for a trip abroad where he was to meet the English champion, "Kid" Wallace, in an international battle. Kelly was very confident of Tommy's ability to defeat the champion, even allowing for Herman's long and successful ring experience and his age, for he was many years older. However, the money question was a stumbling-block. Kelly would have to find a backer for Tommy. Why not see Mr. Jordan? He was a swell sport, he was, and he might take a chance. Besides, if he lost he'd never miss the money.

II

DAVIS flicked the imaginary crumbs from the spotless table linen, carefully placed the amber cordial within easy reach, then struck a match and held it to their fragrant panetelas.

"What shall we do, Ben?" asked Cummings, as he idly watched the discreet Davis moving silently out of hearing.

"I've engaged a box for the Broadway tonight, thinking you might join me there," replied the other.

"What's the play?"

"I mean the Broadway Athletic Club. I have taken a little flyer in Prize Ring 5's. That is to say," he continued, as he noticed Cummings's puzzled expression with a smile, "I'm the unknown backer of Tommy Dunnigan, who fights Willie Herman at the Broadway tonight for the championship, and I had hoped you would care to come along while I watched my investment."

"How came this?" asked Cummings disinterestedly.

"There is a man named 'Red' Kelly whom I know well. You probably remember the red-headed fellow who was connected with my racing stable several years ago. Well, that is he. Prize-fighting demands his attention now, but he is perfectly honest withal. A month ago he came to see me and told me about this Tommy Dunnigan, and I became interested in the little fighter."

"Little?"

"Yes; they box for the bantam championship, which is about one hundred and ten pounds."

"I don't fancy the small fellows," said Cummings indifferently; "the middle-weights are more interesting."

"I can't agree with you. The lighter the weight the less brutal the fight, and there is certainly more action in the bantam weights; but the life of this boy Dunnigan has been especially pathetic." And he related the story of Tommy's bringing-up.

Cummings's cigar had gone out and he sat, as he had during the entire

narrative, with his eyes on the speaker but with his thoughts afar. Jordan wondered if he had at last interested Cummings. During the past fifteen years these two middle-aged men had led their solitary lives, meeting occasionally during business hours and often at this exclusive club, but never until tonight had Cummings shown genuine interest in any living thing. Cummings's supreme indifference toward the world in general, his wonderful self-control and his usual impassiveness and imperturbability, which never changed beyond an air of well-bred cynicism, had marked him as a man of coldness and selfish concentration.

"It is mighty tough, Ben, when you think of it," he said thoughtfully. "The world hasn't dealt fairly with that little chap. His short life has been a long fight. He's been cheated out of his school-days and his best play days, too. No parents," he added reflectively; "no softening influence anywhere; no environment but muckers and brutality; no past and no future but the blood of the prize ring. Perhaps his father may have been at the ringside watching him fight and not known it. And his end—why, it's as sure as the season's—some cheap position in a gambling house or a drunkard in the gutter."

"Well, what's come over you, old man?" inquired Jordan in some surprise. "Your sudden overflow of sentiment barely escapes the maudlin," he added lightly.

"Oh, I guess not," he answered with a queer expression. "However, I want to see this quick asset of yours, and we had better start. Davis," with an almost imperceptible nod to that perfect servant, "my car."

As they rolled downtown in the powerful racing-machine Cummings was strangely talkative and Jordan pondered over the peculiar change in his friend. This he attributed to many things without satisfying himself, and then mentally decided that it would work out its own solution.

Two negroes were fighting a prelimi-

nary when they entered their box, but their efforts, while holding the rapt attention of the great crowd, received no more than an occasional cursory glance from Cummings.

"Do you know, Jordan," he said immovably as the fighters retired temporarily to their respective corners, puffing and heaving from their exertions, "that a fight between negroes appeals to my natural love of a contest about as much as a dog-fight, and if there is anything more brutal and disgusting than a dog-fight I have yet to find it out. How old did you say this boy is?"

"Barely eighteen."

Cummings surveyed the audience critically and was inwardly amused at the antics of the coatless men on the upper tiers as they occasionally hurled words of advice at the men in the ring or howled with glee when an especially hard blow landed. The private boxes were rapidly filling now with the real devotees of boxing to whom the final bout only appealed. Suddenly one of the fighters slipped to his knee and held up a glove.

"Go on! go on!" yelled his second, but he shook his head and did not move. The referee waved his hand toward the other man and then a perfect fusillade of fierce imprecations assailed the ears of the negro who had refused to continue.

"Oh, you cur! Get out, you yellow dog! Knock de stiff in de head!" was shouted at him; and as he hung his head and walked down the aisle toward his dressing-room, hisses and derisive cat-calls followed him as long as he remained in sight. He had broken his hand, which the spectators did not know; but perhaps that knowledge would have made no difference.

"Ah, here comes Dunnigan!" exclaimed Jordan, as a great cheer arose. A man with fiery, close-cropped hair was leading a number of seconds, and in the rear came a boy in a dressing-gown who stopped to shake hands many times. The boxer did not come up to the shoulders of his handlers, and among those square-jawed and

deep-chested men he looked delicate and sadly out of place. He sat in his chair, his face inscrutable, and the pallor thereon accentuated by his riotous black curls. Jordan noticed that Cummings did not remove his eyes from Tommy.

"That boy looks fragile," said Jordan, "and such a nice face, too. Just look at these brutes who are anxiously waiting for the time when he may be covered with blood. Ugh!"

"I have been thinking, Jordan," said Cummings a moment later, "that I have seen that youngster before. There is something very familiar about his face."

"Well, this is quite a coincidence," replied Jordan. "I saw the boy at his training quarters some time ago, and I was also immediately struck with his remarkable resemblance to somebody I could not place."

By this time Herman and his handlers had entered the ring and the champion shook hands with Tommy. Kelly recognized Jordan and walked over to his box.

"It's two to one on Herman," said the veteran, "an' it's good bettin' fer yer, Mr. Jordan, if yer care to lay any more."

"Not at that price, thank you," replied Jordan drily. "I don't fancy the short end of anything. Bring over your boy."

Tommy smiled down at them childishly when he was introduced, and when Cummings shook the little fighter's hand he marveled that it should be so small.

"How are you feeling, sonny?" asked Jordan, lacking something better to say.

The boxer shot a searching glance at him as he replied: "What made you call me sonny? Tommy Dunnigan is my name."

"Does it make any difference?"

"Oh, no, sir; but nobody has called me that since my mo—since I was a kid," he said.

"They don't call boys sonny in your ward," declared Jordan with a laugh.

"I know my name is Dunnigan, but

"I ain't Irish," he asserted stoutly. "Am I, 'Red'?" he asked, appealing to Kelly; but just then the referee said: "Come, boys, get ready."

Tommy turned and walked to his corner. Kelly also started, but a nod from Cummings stopped him.

"Bring him to my apartments tomorrow, win or lose," said Cummings, and he handed up his card to the surprised trainer.

While the shrill-voiced announcer was shouting the conditions of the match both fighters stood up and threw aside their dressing-gowns. They were of the same height, but here all resemblance ended. Herman was an ideal champion in build—albeit he was of small mold—with his large neck, broad shoulders and layers of muscles upon his back and legs to delight the eye of a sculptor. In direct contrast to this descendant of the tribe of Esau was his opponent, whose hairless skin was as smooth and fair as Carrara marble. There was little or no muscular development to be seen—in a word, he looked boyish and plainly unequal to the task before him. Cummings noticed his own hand on the railing. His fingers were steadily tapping the wood. What had come over him? He was actually trembling. He looked at the boy's innocent face and then placed one hand to his throat. How insufferably hot it was! A feeling of pity swept over him and—c-c-clang! The bell had struck.

The fighters, amid an oppressive silence, moved toward each other like two bantam roosters, and then in the next instant the roped inclosure seemed to the astonished Cummings to be literally full of arms and gloves.

No sooner was he within reach than Tommy went at his opponent like an infuriated wildcat. Before the champion had time to set himself Tommy was all over him, and when Herman realized the situation he fought back with a vengeance. The great crowd went simply mad with excitement as the human whirlpool in the ring swirled from one side to the other, separated for an instant and then resolved itself

into another seething vortex of arms, gloves and legs.

Around the ring they went, slugging each other unceasingly, blow after blow landing with the speed of lightning, and whenever the champion was forced to step back Tommy was at him again, never resting, never discontinuing his cyclonic attack. His blows fell upon the champion like hail, coming from every direction and with a telling force behind them. They were deaf to the frenzied shrieks of the audience and totally unaware of the fact that they were throwing their science and caution to the four winds of heaven. A chance blow, if landed on the right spot, would knock either of them out. The champion finally succeeded in clinching, yet he was in such a dazed condition from the furious onslaught that he dodged and ducked several times, even though Tommy's arms were absolutely motionless.

"What a change in that boy's face!" thought Cummings, as he saw Tommy trying to get free from the champion's hold. His expression of almost childish innocence had changed to one of insane fury—he was a little fighting devil. Just as the referee separated them the bell struck.

Cummings realized, as the fighters went to their corners and the great tension relaxed, how extremely wrought up he had become over the battle.

"It can't last long at that pace," declared Jordan; "another round will finish one or the other. Whew! but did you ever in your life see such a scrap—?" and then he stopped short.

Cummings was gazing over toward Tommy's corner with a face as pale as death.

"Oh, I say, Cummings, what's up?" he asked, laying a hand on the other's knee.

"Nothing," replied Cummings almost roughly, as he roused himself. "I can't get over it," he said vacantly; "I've seen that boy somewhere else."

With the stroke of the gong again did Tommy sail in with unabated strength. However, the experienced champion had gathered himself to-

gether and he evaded Tommy's rush by coolly side-stepping. He turned quickly as Tommy again rushed, measured him with an eye of a hawk and then—Tommy toppled over backward from the force of a right-hand swing which had caught him flush on the jaw. He bounded to his feet like a rubber ball and was at the champion like a flash, forcing him to retreat with an avalanche of stinging blows. It was jab, jab and swing after swing, upper cut and hook until the champion began to make wild swings in return like a crazy man; but he could not stem the tide. Tommy was playing for Herman's head, and the latter was doing his best to block, when Tommy suddenly shifted and drove his left and right to the champion's stomach. Herman dropped his hands with a look of agony and then grasped Tommy in mad desperation as his vicious antagonist came at him once more. Tommy fought himself free with terrible short-arm blows and again closed in on the champion, beating him back until at times he was himself staggered by the champion's wild swings, but always renewing his attack with the same unceasing vindictiveness. At last the champion was entirely on the defensive.

Cummings and Jordan were on their feet; in fact, every spectator was standing and yelling at the top of his lungs. Suddenly a frightful right-hand swing on the head put the champion down and he arose slowly. Again was he knocked over, and as Tommy stood above him waiting for him to get on his feet something struck his own foot. Looking down he saw it was a sponge. He turned and walked to his corner with the innocent face of a cherub. Tommy was the bantam champion.

He showed no effects from the battle when he appeared the next day with Kelly at Cummings's rooms. The latter shook hands warmly with Tommy as he asked: "How does it feel to be a champion?"

"All right, sir," he answered; "but I think I'm going to be champion of the world."

"Dat's right," explained Kelly. "Dis mornin' we cabled our forfeit to de National Club of London an' clinched a match wid Wallace. It comes off in two months an' we're going to send de rest of de side bet, four thousand, by Saturday."

Cummings was thoughtful for a moment. "That is very nice," he said; "but I'd like to give Tommy a position here with me. I need a young man to answer the bell, and he'll have a good home. He may go abroad and fight Wallace when the time comes and I'll pay him—oh, I'll use him right. What do you say, Kelly?"

The latter almost gasped with surprise. A real millionaire on Tommy's staff! It was a cinch. What did he say!

"I say he comes here, sure," he answered, with fervor.

"How about you, my boy?" said Cummings, turning to Tommy.

"I should like it, sir," he replied, with a smile.

When Jordan dropped in on Cummings shortly afterward he was nonplused to behold the bantam champion at the door.

"I felt very sorry for the youngster," said Cummings, in explaining Tommy's presence to him, "and I've concluded to help him along a little. He looks above this fighting game, and besides—I'm somehow greatly attached to him."

"Of course, you're old enough to know your own mind, but you're leaving yourself open to much unkind criticism. A prize-fighter for 'buttons'! It strikes me as being absurd. Why, you know nothing about the boy. He may be a mongrel." He argued the matter strongly with Cummings, but could not move his friend.

Tommy had been there about two weeks when Cummings came to him one evening as the boy stood at the open window looking down on the Avenue below. Cummings held something in his hand.

"I picked up this locket in your room this morning," said Cummings. "Whose picture is this?"

"My mother's, sir," answered the boy quietly.

"Indeed! Will you tell me all you remember about her?"

Tommy related briefly everything that his memory recalled of the woman who had always been so good to him. "One thing she said I'll never forget," he concluded, "and that was 'to be more of a man than my father.' And I will."

There were tears in the boy's eyes as he turned and left the room.

"What's up now?" asked Jordan an hour later as he entered Cummings's library. He had made a hurried response to the latter's urgent telephone message. "Has little Tommy sailed for Europe without telling you of it?" he asked banteringly.

"Tommy isn't going to Europe to fight."

"What!"

Cummings shook his head with decision.

"How foolish!" said Jordan excitedly. "Then the boy will lose the five-thousand-dollar forfeit he has posted."

Cummings stood up. "I don't give a damn if he loses ten times that. I can pay it," he said forcibly. "Why, man, if you knew what I do you wouldn't let him get knocked down once for five thousand dollars."

He sat down and then smiled happily at Jordan, who eyed him in a most perplexed manner.

"Now you'll be glad to know this, Ben, I think. I know to a certainty who Tommy's mother was and who his father is. You knew her well, and you liked her. See that locket on

the table? It contains his mother's picture. Tommy and I are going out for awhile, but before I return I want you to look at it.

"I am going to take you to call on a nice old lady, Tommy," he said, when they were seated in the big touring-car.

They sped around corners and finally glided silently up a broad avenue. Tommy's eyes widened when they stopped in front of the great stone mansion. They alighted and were going up the steps when Tommy said:

"There goes your choffoor, sir."

"Never mind," replied Cummings.

The massive door was opened by the butler, who started perceptibly when he saw Cummings.

"Have I changed so much?" he asked, with a good-natured smile.

"Quite a bit, sir," replied the old, gray-headed servant. "It's many years since you've come— Very good, sir," he continued, as Cummings gave him a peculiar look. "I'll send at once, sir."

They seated themselves in the wide hall and Tommy's eyes fell upon the picture of a youth hanging opposite. Why, it looked like—! A gown rustled on the stair and he saw Cummings stand up. A sweet-faced old lady was coming toward them with her eyes shining.

"I've come home," he said, with a catch in his voice which was strangely like a sob; "I've come home to stay, mother." He put his arm around the boy and drew him close. "And I've brought home your—grandson."



HE ALONE ESCAPED

BEN—Did Archie disgrace himself at college?
 FPED—Oh, no. His home folks were the only ones disgraced.

L'ORGUEIL ET LE SILENCE

CONTE CORÉEN

Par Camille de Sainte-Croix

QUAND la secte presque chrétienne des Tonghaksoutos eut bousculé toutes les vieilles sciences traditionnelles au pays du Matin calme, le Génie des Cinq Préceptes s'interdit de résister et de lutter. Il préféra s'abstraire de ce monde nouveau. Ayant élu pour séjour l'île déserte de Yésama, perdue en mer à distance égale des côtes de Chosen et de l'archipel des Ainos, il s'y établit dans une ceinture de rochers, aux sources du fleuve Shiou. Là, il faisait son unique occupation de se contempler dans le miroir du Passé, et dans la seule société de deux sombres camarades, l'Orgueil et le Silence, habituels conseillers du Génie.

Après bien des années de cette retraite, il advint qu'une nuit les caprices de deux courants marins portèrent à la fois sur la côte est et sur la côte ouest de l'île, deux flottilles étrangères, en égale détresse. A leurs feux, on pouvait distinguer que c'étaient, d'une part, des émigrants du Chosen, et, de l'autre, des émigrants Ainos cherchant aventure et chassés sans doute de leurs pays contraires par quelques récentes et simultanées guerres religieuses.

Le Génie des Cinq Préceptes n'admettait pas que l'on troublât son repos. Il appela ses deux compagnons: "Holà, frères superbes! Faites une menace de tempête; et chassez loin de notre île, à grands coups d'épouvantes, ces visiteurs importuns!"

... Mais tandis que le fracas d'orage s'apprêtait, la planète Ha-Yeun, la dernière de l'almanach Koang-Sang-Kan, passait dans les voies du Ciel, jetant au Génie son adieu matinal, avant de disparaître dans le jour levant.

Devinant l'œuvre des Solitaires, elle arrêta sa course. On vit peu à peu se détacher de l'orbite sidérale, le char de perroquets et de Kirins où souriait la blanche beauté descendue vers les rochers.

— Pourquoi es-tu si cruel à ces proscrits errants? demanda-t-elle. Et pourquoi cette éternelle solitude? Reprends donc goût à la vie. C'est si amusant! Là-haut, chez moi, ma planète est habitée. J'y regarde tout un monde naître, vivre, aimer; et je ne sais pas de spectacle plus passionnant!

— Non! Non! gronda le sombre Génie ayant consulté d'un clin d'œil ses conseillers intimes. Jamais personne, ici! Partout où il y a la Vie, les forts écrasent les faibles; et le Mal triomphe du Bien... C'est un spectacle que je ne veux plus voir!

— Tu as tort; et le véritable esprit des Cinq Préceptes n'est pas en toi! Tu n'es qu'un grand Génie avare, vaniteux, irascible et fainéant! C'est ce fâcheux égoïsme qui seul te fait taciturne et méchant... Deviens au contraire, pour ces humains, une bonne Providence hospitalière, affable, tutélaire; et tu verras que la Vie est toujours bonne...

— Soit!... Mais je parie ma couronne grise contre ta couronne de roses que si je laisse les familles se former sur mon île, elles seront aussi incurablement mauvaises que partout ailleurs. Regarde bien: Ici, sur notre droite, la côte est agréable, la mer est unie, l'air tiède et le sol fertile; ceux qui s'ébattront en ce riant paysage trouveront toutes les sécurités et toutes les douceurs. Au contraire, sur notre gauche, les vents sont violents et froids, le sol est rocheux, rebelle aux cultures.

Quiconque habitera ce sinistre versant devra lutter contre les plus mornes âpretés d'une nature ingrate; tous les mauvais penchants que peut développer chez l'animal humain la nécessité de créer ses ressources quotidiennes en feront certainement des êtres sans tendresse et sans grâce. Ici, la famille des Aïnos sur ces bords arides; là, celle de Chosen sur les plages fleuries. Le Beau et le Bien, auprès du Mal et de la Laideur. Nous verrons qui triomphera.

— Le pari est tenu; et je n'ai pas perdu mon temps en causant avec toi, puisque sur mon avis, tu vas cesser au moins pour quelques âges d'être monotone et désœuvré. Mais voici le Soleil qui veut poindre. Je dois suivre la Nuit dans sa retraite. Adieu, grand Génie... Nous nous reparlerons dans douze cents Lunes, à compter de l'année Yeul-Mi, qui commence ce matin.

Le Génie tint parole. Il laissa se développer sur la côte ouest la race de Chosen, généreuse, artiste, simple et charmante; et, sur la côte est, celle des Aïnos, barbare et brutale sous l'âpre climat, sur le sol infécond, en pleine croissance de mœurs maudites et néfastes. Puis il contempla les uns et les autres, assis sur la roche, les pieds nus dans la source, attendant que les événements lui donnassent raison ou tort.

En apparence, ils lui donnèrent raison. La race de Chosen et la race d'Aïno, séparées par de naturelles barrières de falaises et de forêts, s'ignorèrent longtemps et se développèrent chacune pour son compte, l'une atteignant l'apogée de sa félicité, l'autre exaltant à l'extrême ses instincts de violence et de rapine. Puis après maints traits d'Histoire, héroïques ou bouffons, comme il s'en voit dans toutes les annales du Monde, la pénétration eut lieu, et les conflits éclatèrent. Les bonnes gens de Chosen se virent accablés d'une invasion sans merci par les bandes féroces d'Aïnos.

Alors, le Génie conclut que son pari était gagné. Il arrêta l'horreur des massacres et des pillages en grossissant les eaux du fleuve Shiou jusqu'à les faire déborder en houle de flots inexorables, qui balayèrent et poussèrent

tout à la fois aux gouffres de la Mer, les Bons et les Méchants, rétablissant sur l'île déserte sa lourde royauté de Silence et d'Orgueil.

Les douze cents lunes étaient accomplies. Au soir promis, Ha-Yeun reparut sur son char de Kirins et de perroquets roses, et prévint le sourire victorieux du Génie.

— Crois-tu donc ta partie gagnée? Il faudrait pour cela que tu ne te sois pas contenté d'être un spectateur malveillant et sceptique. Nos conditions comportaient qu'en laissant ton île se peupler, tu deviendrais une Bonne Providence; or, c'est cela que tu ne sus pas être. Au lieu de laisser les Bons s'engourdir dans leur mollesse de race heureuse, il fallait leur ouvrir la voie d'entreprises allègres et vaillantes, prodiguant au dehors l'abondance de leur civilisation naturelle. Par leur féconde expansion, ils auraient gagné la terre des Mauvais pour y propager leurs germes de grâce et de joie. Le Bien eût alors triomphé du Mal; et c'est moi qui aurais gagné le pari! Mais tu ne l'as pas gagné non plus, puisque tu n'as pas fait ton devoir providentiel.

Le Génie était loyal. Il acquiesça, aigrement. Pourtant, dans sa mauvaise humeur, c'est à ses camarades qu'il s'en prit, leur reprochant de l'avoir mal conseillé.

Ha-Yeun, conciliante, s'interposa encore:

— Allons! Partie nulle! C'est à refaire! Mais si tu veux bien, nous la recommencerons chez moi. Malgré tes défauts, je t'aime, grand Génie, toi si rude et si fort! Laisse donc tes compagnons ici, puisque tu les a fait maîtres de ce néant; et puisqu'ils s'y plaisent. Deviens l'époux de mes bras blancs, de ma bouche éternellement riieuse, de ma poitrine qui se gonfle, toujours jeune. Porté par mes oiseaux vermeils, accède à mon astre souriant. Là, quand tu te seras instruit dans ma lumière, tu comprendras que le Génie fait mieux son œuvre en imposant à l'Univers des exemples d'amour et des images de bonheur, qu'en soumettant dans un rêve désert, sa pensée incertaine aux conseils rancuniers de l'Orgueil et du Silence.

THE PASSING OF GON OUT

By Theodore Waters

IF you go out by the Sound steamer route past Blackwell's Island those who know will point out to you the "Chinaman's Seat," which is a small rock situated halfway up the Manhattanward shore. Every evening at dusk a Chinaman used to come down from the prisoners' cook-house and sit blinking at the brilliance of the big boats with such strange persistence that in time he came to be pointed out as a curiosity and stories were told about him on the smoke deck.

The Chinaman was known as Gon Out, an island rendering which was sufficiently suggestive and which did him very well for a nickname. But he was more of a curiosity than the people on the boats guessed. He was a study, an object of pathological interest. His memory went back but a few years—not more than six, the doctors decided. Of his life previous to that they could learn nothing. He told them of crossing a big water, of wandering over a big land, of sufferings by the way, of his admission to the island as a vagrant. It was an unvarnished tale, and its vagueness would have been laid to the door of his Orientalism but for two things—one, that he was a Chinaman without religion, even without language, unless you reckon with his pigeon English, and as such had been cast forth from the ranks of his countrymen, who could not too fully despise the man who knew naught of and cared less for the bones of his ancestors; the other, that Watson, the house physician, who was a Mason, discovered one day that Gon had an inkling of the ritual.

Watson told the other doctors about it and worked with Gon a long time

in the hope that this might prove the connecting link with his past. But it was only an inkling, after all, and the curtain remained down. Although his efforts failed, Watson was willing to wager that Gon "was no Canton coolie before he stepped out of the ranks." When it was seen that he had no desire to run away, Gon was made a "trusty" and given a job in the cook-house which allowed him a certain amount of freedom.

One evening when he had been on the island five years Gon sat in his rock seat gazing with half-closed eyes at the reflections which wriggled over the water from the last and biggest of the boats. There was that in the reflections which reminded him of something he had seen in the past. He could not tell what the something was, and his face wore a puzzled expression as he tried to remember. Again and again he made the effort, but the more he thought the more confused he became, and finally, when the steamer had passed on and the reflections had thinned out and disappeared, he fell to watching the swells chasing one another along shore.

In the narrow channel the swells break heavily against the shore wall and the spray falls like a curtain on the rocks. While looking through this Gon saw a black rowboat bobbing uneasily on the crest of a roller about a furlong from shore. There was no moon, but he could see that no one sat in the boat. The tide was running out, the waves were going up obliquely and the opposing effects drove the boat steadily shoreward. Gon rose and followed it slowly along, watching it curiously. A big wave hurled it at last against the

abutment at the Chinaman's feet. He reached down and grabbed the gunwale to prevent the following swells from smashing it against the wall. There was nothing in the boat, and the painter dragged loosely over the bow. Probably it had broken away from some vessel bound out through the Gate. Gon hauled in the rope and when the last swell went by he tied the line to a bush on shore and went back to his rock seat to think about it. He sat there until his usual time to turn in, and then with a new light on his face stole off to his bunk in the shed by the cook-house.

Kerry Flanagan, the cook-house watchman, saw him go in and bade him good night patronizingly, and Gon responded without more than his usual unction, a fact which afterward preyed upon Mr. Flanagan's mind and caused him to raise his voice next day in the presence of his superintendent.

"To think," said Kerry, "to think he could be that unconcerned like, and then go steal the bed slats from under him and run off unbeknownst to me. It wasn't like him, so it wasn't."

But Mr. Flanagan's imagination was limited, after all, by the appearance of things. Gon, after closing the door of his room on Mr. Flanagan, had quietly slipped two slats from his bed, climbed out of the window and made his way stealthily down to the shore; but plunder was far from his mind. He had merely become possessed of a desire to leave the island and had taken advantage of the situation in a manner least calculated to arouse suspicion. Casting off the painter, he got into the boat and, placing the slats in the oar-cleats, pulled out into the stream.

Gon had no idea where he was going. Indeed, he gave the matter not a thought. But this was characteristic. Five years' residence in a city institution and a natural Oriental capacity for irresponsibility are not likely to beget forebodings concerning the future. As might a child whose memory dated back but six years he had connected the boat with the idea of going somewhere, and having started on the

journey he was content to float with the tide. Presently he found that his bed-slat oars were of greater use in guiding than in propelling the boat, for, in spite of all he could do, they would turn sidewise to the ebb. But the current runs strong between Blackwell's Island and Manhattan, and in a very little while it had carried him abreast of the long point of rocks which forms the southern end of the island. He swung out into the centre of the river, where the water runs less swiftly than in the western passage, and here in the tide streak he drew in his oars and became part of the general drift.

The miracle of his safe passage through the maze of the river's activity was not more remarkable than his wonder at the panorama which sped before his eyes. What he saw was like a picture without perspective, for the sense of comparison was beyond his grasp. He saw things which, like the Sound steamers, almost opened the doors of his memory, but admittance was always denied to him. The strain made his head ache and he ended by taking refuge in that fatalism which is as the breath of the Asiatic, and all things became as one to him. The light, the dark, the pleasure, the pain, the heat, the cold, the distance, the direction—it mattered not. He moved with the tide streak and had he returned with the changing tide it would still have mattered not. But that was not part of the general scheme of things, for at last, without the raising of an oar, his boat went shoreward to the wharves which abut on Fulton Market. It missed the piling neatly and went into the dark beneath a pier without an effort on his part to stop it. Presently it grated against the inner platform.

Now this wharf was the retreat of that informal organization known locally as the Fish Market Gang, of which one "Bute," surnamed the Grumbler, was the distinguished head. And when Gon went in "Bute" and three brother wharf rats were even then sitting around a packing-box on the platform and having a little game of

"draw" by the light of a candle. A fifth member had gone for a can of beer, and the noise of Gon's boat was mistaken by the card players for the signal of his arrival. The Grumbler had just filled a straight and the others had prospects, so no one looked up at the moment. One of them growled out:

"Get a gait on, Danny. What was ye doin'—makin' it?"

As no answer came from the belated Danny, Bute turned with a curse. Seeing Gon rising from the boat in the semi-darkness the Grumbler jumped to his feet with a yell of "Cops!" He overturned the box and, followed by his companions, sped away into the darkness far up under the pier.

Gon got out of his boat and picked up the candle which lay spluttering on its side. Instantly there was a report and a bullet singed his head and buried itself in the piling beyond. The Chinaman yelped like a struck spaniel and dropped the candle. The light went out. Then, with the instinct of self-preservation, he fled into his boat and pulled from under the pier. Another bullet followed him out, but he got safely into the open. Sculling into the berth beside the wharf, he clambered up over the stringpiece into South street.

Passengers leaving a Fulton ferry-boat concealed his landing from the watchman at the head of the pier, and he followed the crowd westward. Gradually the crowd thinned out and he stopped, wondering what to do next. Then the roar of an Elevated train attracted him and he followed it up Pearl street. The wound on his head troubled him a little. He bound it up in a large bandanna handkerchief and trudged on. The bandanna absorbed without revealing to the casual passerby the blood that pumped out of his wound every time he strained his neck to view the wonder of the "L" road overhead.

Once, as he looked up, a strange word babbled to his lips—a word he could not understand. It was such a curious word and it reminded him so forcibly of something or other he had

heard and forgotten that he repeated it over and over again. This word was *Fan Kwei*, which, translated literally from the Chinese, means foreign devil. Later on, after he had strained his neck again, another strange word came out. He stopped and repeated it—"Hsiu tsai, Hsiu tsai," again and again. *Hsiu tsai* means first literary degree. Again, when a drunkard jostled him, he said quite fiercely, "*Samshu*," and passed on without knowing what it meant or why he had said it. He did not notice that this increasing vocabulary was making his bandanna wetter and wetter or that the number of the words was growing with the passage of the trains. And, as there are naturally many trains passing on that road, Gon had said many strange things by the time he was ready to step out into the tawdry brilliance of Chatham Square. Standing near the old Jewish burying-ground he could see directly across the square and into the vista of Mott street, with its lanterns shaking on the balconies, its chattering throngs and its overpowering odors. There was something intensely delightful about these things, and they drew him to them as iron is drawn to a magnet.

Chinatown is the Mecca for all the Chinese of Greater New York and the smaller cities nearby, and even among his countrymen Gon might not have attracted undue attention. But it so happened that his path crossed that of little Joe Enright, the lobbygar. The stray gamins who get their living mostly by running errands for the white women of the quarter are known as lobbygars. From the eyes of the lobbygar little is hidden, and the condition has its sinister aspects. Little Joe was deserving of neither more pity nor less censure than the rest of his class, although he might have been surprised to find that he deserved either. Just then he was in sore trouble. For a week he had pyramided the New Year's gig in that quarter lottery, the Bah-ka-pu, so dear to the Celestial heart and pocketbook, and all had gone his way until this day when,

with unaccountable inconsistency, his number had failed to come out. He had wandered down to the junction of Mott and Worth streets where, in the glare of the arc light, he stood looking cynically at the characters on the yellow paper ticket with the green border which proclaimed the reassuring legend that "the world is vast." Joe, whose philosophy was simple, uttered a profane truth concerning the Chinese and their ways and cast the ticket bit by bit into the gutter. Just then Gon Out stepped past in the full glare of the light.

"What a bird-lookin' Chink!" muttered the boy as, with the natural instinct of the grafter, he proceeded to dog the Chinaman's footsteps.

Gon wandered slowly along, looking with perplexity into the windows piled high with red and yellow gewgaws of the Orient, carved teak cabinets and ornaments of jade; into the cellarways hung with dried nests and cuttle-bone; at the balconies filled with sallow-faced Mongols, hurling jibes at one another in a strange tongue and breathing down the scent of rice liquor and rose wine. These indeed affected him strangely, but above all there was the powerful, all-pervading odor of the "dope" which was like a breath from the past and which filled him with vague desire.

In front of the Lee Hop Tong, which is a restaurant on the second floor of a tenement, stood a closed carriage with white horses, and on the sidewalk an expectant group of quarter riffraff. Evidently they waited for somebody to come out of the doorway.

Gon stopped and waited with the rest. Presently he felt his sleeve tugged, and turned to find a small boy who asked him in broken Cantonese if he would like to see where the lady lived, accompanying his question with a nod of his head toward the carriage. It was Joe Enright, who had marked him for a stranger and who scented possible perquisites for conducting him about; not from Gon, but from other individuals, his friends of the lottery, for instance, who might be much in-

terested in any yellow stranger in Chinatown. Gon shook his head with his old air of perplexity, for even in the boy's jargon he felt the vibration of the lost chord. Joe judged him by other lights and repeated his insinuations in another dialect. Gon replied in the English he had picked up on the island:

"No sabe you talk; talk all same me."

Its effect upon the lobbygar was tremendous.

"Hully gee!" he gasped. "He don't understand his own langwige."

It came into the boy's mind that perhaps Gon was a disguised emissary of the police. But he put the thought from him after another scrutiny of that placid countenance.

"Where'd you come from?" he asked.

"Islan'. Ribbah. Big boat, go by all time."

"Is that so?" Joe looked upon this as whole cloth, woven for the purpose of misleading him. Generally speaking, he knew the Mongolian habit of mind. He met it, therefore, with a truth which he supposed would be accepted as a lie. "Well, I come from the islan' meself, onct. Orphan. See?"

"You come along wid me and I'll show you," he continued, leading Gon away from the crowd. "Dose people are waitin' to see Fook Chew's wife start back to China. Fook's rich. She's a little-foot, and dey say he had to give up a big wad for her, 'cause she didn't want to marry him in the first place. Mary Kelly, the 'White Rose,' says it'd 'a' been all right if he'd kept her in China where the women don't have much to say, but he goes and brings her to Ne' York and she gets onto the ways of the white goils. Fook takes to runnin' after the 'Rose,' and Mrs. Fook bein' put wise by one of her re-lations, she and Fook don't do a thing but have a run in. Now she's leavin' him and startin' for China. Maybe she wouldn't be let, though, if her re-lations wasn't in it. Say, we'll go back into the yard."

Most of this was lost on Gon, who was more interested in the long red streamers which waved uneasily under the eaves of the temple of Joss. They brought to his mind the reflections of the steamer lights, but before the comparison was quite complete he was compelled, perforce, to stop and ejaculate the words "*Ta Tsing Kwo*."

"Great pure kingdom," translated Joe, who knew this as a legend on one of the lottery tickets. To him it was evidence that the man was feigning ignorance of Chinese, but he did not mention it. "Yes," he went on, "it's a good gig, that. We'll see Lee Wong inside and maybe he'll let you have it."

The Bah-ka-pu lottery has, for obvious municipal reasons, no settled habitation, and the yellow tickets are sold literally from under the hats of the four or five men who run it. But Gon's mind was far from lotteries.

They turned into a dark hallway in one of the tenements. It was a narrow passage and ended suddenly on the brink of a flight of stairs leading to a cellar. At the bottom of the stairs they had to step over a drunken man or woman—they could not tell which—who had fallen there in the dark. They passed into a damp cellar, Joe leading Gon by the hand among the broken ginseng crates and through a jagged hole in a foundation wall where a gas flame burned dimly. Then they climbed up again into a rear tenement and passed down a hallway that opened out on a court.

It was a square-paved place, hemmed in on all sides by the tenements. It was the common area of communication between the buildings, and many passages opened out of it. A fugitive having gained this court would become lost to his pursuers, since he might choose any one of twenty exits. Lanterns hung on lines at various altitudes. An old Chinese stone bed stood at one side. A strip of carpet reached across the stones between two opposite doors. Chinamen sat on benches, stood in groups or lay about in careless attitudes. Many of them

smoked cigarettes, and all were in that picturesque undress which the average American never sees. Colored lights streaked from a hundred windows in the court walls, and over the sills leaned women in silk-figured wrappers. Some of the women were yellow and some were white; some still had the dope stick in their hands. The subdued singsong of the dialects rose up from the pavement and mingled with the hum from the windows. Above all could be heard the plaintive squeal of a Chinese fiddle.

"That's Fook Chew smoking over there on the stone bed by the wall," said Joe to Gon, as they stood in the shadow of their doorway. Gon had been looking up at the criss-cross of the window gleams, but at the word he brought his head down suddenly, and it was not good for his wound.

"Fook Chew!" He said it in a whisper that leaped sibilantly from wall to wall. And then, before the startled lobbygar could stop him, he had walked out into the half light of the court. At the sound of the voice Fook Chew's cigarette stopped halfway to his mouth and when he saw Gon it dropped to the flagging, but his hand remained up. The humming of the hive increased at sight of the newcomer. He stopped in the centre of the court with the bewildered air of one who, having found what he long sought, has as suddenly lost it. When the tension was greatest Fook Chew's wife stepped out of a doorway.

There was a straining of necks from the windows as the woman came forth, and a half-suppressed murmur of approbation, for her going would establish a precedent of value to every other woman in the quarter. She was gorgeously dressed, as befitted the occasion. Her cheeks were tinted with bismuth, but her head was bare. In her coif and on her wrists were ornaments worn only by Chinese women of high caste, and she hobbled across the strip of carpet with the air of one who knows that the way will be cleared, who in China might have the obstructing populace beaten aside with thongs,

But Gon Out at that moment was not a Chinaman, and at sight of her he stood in her way like one transfixed. She paused and stamped her foot angrily in front of this red-hooded apparition. He, far from recoiling, leaned forward and peered with great yearning into her eyes. He even touched her gently on the breast.

Instantly her people rose up from the flagging and the benches. The drone of the voices died out. The fiddle stopped its wailing. One brawny Mongol reached for Gon's neck. Probably he meant to get his queue, but he got the bandanna instead and it came away with a sucking sound that made the man who pulled it recoil from his work. But the crowd that pressed to the undoing of the man on the carpet strip never reached him. The instant the handkerchief went from his face the fire died from the eyes of Fook Chew's wife. She uttered an indescribable choking cry and fell senseless. Fook Chew rolled off the bed and groveled on the stones. A near relative of Mrs. Fook kotowed violently and uttered an invocation to the god of the dead, and the others, taking their cue from these, fell away slowly and gazed with superstitious awe at the strange being that had taken the place of Gon Out.

For with the wrenching away of the blood clot, Gon Out, the characterless, religionless nonentity of Blackwell's Island, had disappeared and in his place stood a dignified, high-caste Chinaman, who to his knowledge had not spent one moment of life outside the Flowery Kingdom. And they listened—the men on the flags and the women above—while in finely modulated tones this high-born Celestial poured forth a Chinese rendering of the dictum of Socrates:

... for neither in this nor in any other world can lasting harm befall a good man.

His countenance bore a nobleness of expression, even of outline, that had never existed on the face of Gon Out. But what impressed his listeners most was the feeling, instinctive to all, that the words he uttered were the comple-

tion of a sentence begun in China long years before.

He drew himself up as the words ceased flowing and seemed to realize for the first time the strangeness of his situation. He looked around him with startled amazement, at the fear-struck faces, at Fook Chew groveling on the flags, at the lanterns and the towering walls, at the windows filled with ribald women. He looked down at his own coarse clothes, and touched the hem of his blouse as he might, perforce, have touched the death shroud of the unclean. Finally his glance fell upon the upturned face of Fook Chew's wife.

"*Yan-she.*"

Sometimes it is given to man to express his whole life's emotion in one word.

"*Yan-she.*"

It rang from his lips like an appeal to the goddess of divination, and its echo came back like the voice of an oracle, pregnant with a hundred meanings. Love, doubt, faith, hope, hate, despair, reverberated between the walls, sighing, pleading, fighting for the mastery of this newly awakened soul, leaving him helpless for the moment, incapable of judgment; but finally, as he seemed to spell out the meaning of the situation, filling him with indignation so terrible of outward aspect that even the bravest of them there quailed before it. His was the attitude of the knight who has found his lady in the den of beasts and awaits the battle in her defense. He stood there eying them silently, a figure of might. When at last he saw that none meant to oppose him the rancor died out of his face and he turned to the still motionless form of *Yan-she*. Stooping, he tried to lift her and, as a final hemorrhage took him, fell heavily with her on the carpet strip.

And then from that court arose a sound which was not pleasant to hear—the weird, shrill voice of a mob in anger. The women in the windows calling to one another saw a mass of Orientals surging in front of the stone bed under which crouched Fook Chew, and on which one of his wife's relatives was

dancing about and gesticulating and pointing alternately at the man under his feet and the group on the carpet. Several of the more timid females withdrew from their window-sills and little Joe Enright, the lobbygar, rushed out through the cellar passages and into Mulberry street police station with a tale that hastily brought back the reserves. And yet Joe might have known better. He might have known that whatever was to be done in the case would never come to the eyes of anyone without the national streak of yellow in his veins. Even before the lobbygar had gained the street men began to extinguish the lanterns, and a big Chinaman with a stentorian voice ordered all the windows closed. Those who live under the domination of the Chinese know what it means not to obey. And so, when the police rushed in a few minutes later, they found only the moon peeping into a deserted court.

Now the following at least is true, as many denizens of the quarter bore witness: The wife of Fook Chew went back to China, for the carriage with the white horses, after waiting nearly all night in Mott street, drove off with her to the railway depot. And three days later a Chinaman of high rank was buried from the Masonic Temple in Pell street. His bier was visited by Kerry Flanagan, of Blackwell's Island, who was assisting a detective to iden-

tify the lost Gon Out. Little Joe Enright, the lobbygar, told them it was the man he had led into the courtyard, but Kerry declared positively that the dead man was not Gon Out. Joe told them a story of Chinese voodooism, in which a man was "changed" before his very eyes, but they laughed at him and kept up their still hunt assisted by one of the men who had been in the court that night.

Mary Kelly, the White Rose, told Fu Suing's German wife that Fook Chew once got jealous of a certain Charley Toy. He had warned her to have nothing to do with Charley, saying boastfully that before he had married Mrs. Fook in China she had favored another suitor and that this suitor had disappeared mysteriously and was never heard of again.

"I asked him if he killed him," said the Rose impressively, "and he wouldn't say yes, aye or no. But after what *we* saw I'll bet every dollar I've got on the Bah-ka-pu that it was 'that man.'"

If you ask in Chinatown today what has become of Fook Chew you will find everyone singularly uncommunicative. Even Joe Enright, the lobbygar, does not care to tell all he knows of what happened that night in the courtyard. Once, when asked if he thought Fook Chew was dead, he said "No" quite positively, and then added: "But you bet he'd like to be."



HER CHOICE

MADGE—She's engaged to a young clergyman.

MARJORIE—That girl always did like the good things of this world.



A FAIR EXCHANGE

"YOUR cow got into my garden, sir, and ate up all of my vegetables."

"Well, sir, I'll send you over a couple of quarts of her milk."

RONDEAU TO A HELPFUL FRIEND

YOUR bright idea I tried to use—
 Too proud a boon lightly to lose!
 The sparkling treasure of your thought
 I bore away, and patient wrought,
 The gem in words of fire to fuse.

Alas! my dullard brain accuse!
 Gone was the sheen of rainbow hues
 That flashed, when first my fancy caught
 Your bright idea!

Slow moved my wit in leaden shoes;
 To curse my quill I could but choose,
 And pace the floor like one distraught!
 Ah! here's the secret, vainly sought—
 I needed, to inspire my muse,
 Your bright eye, dear!

MARGARET JOHNSON.



IRRESISTIBLE

TED—What attraction can our society girls see in those foreign noblemen?
 NED—They cost so much.



HIGHLY DEVELOPED

ROCKSEY—Has this young man any business ability?
 Miss ROCKSEY—I should say he had, papa. While he could have had
 several poor girls, he decided he wanted me.



“HOW long ago did Herbert take his college degree?”
 “It must have been some time, for he is already getting to be companionable.”

THE REWARDS OF PERSEVERANCE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

I WAS about to pay my usual spring visit to Brussels. At this time of the year the Belgian Paris is particularly attractive to me, and the man who buys my diamonds lives in Brussels.

As a rule I combine business with pleasure. The trouble was that on this occasion I had no diamonds. They are a form of property in which I like to deal: small, valuable, and—apart from their setting—difficult of identification. I remove the settings myself and throw them away. It may possibly be remembered that some years ago a man made a curious find on the Underground Line between Gower street and King's Cross. He found what I had intentionally lost. I never attempt to get the melting-pot value of settings. The risk is quite out of proportion to the profit. If I get a few hundred pounds' worth of diamonds I am content. In this business, as on the Stock Exchange and elsewhere, people lose money through opening their mouths too wide.

It is a rare thing for spring to come round and find me with nothing in my pocket to show to my good friend, the merchant in Brussels, but it was the case this year. I had been busy on other matters. I now began to think out some simple way of supplying the deficiency.

As I turned the pages of the *Morning Post* my eye was arrested by the announcement that a marriage had been arranged, and would take place on the third of the following month, between General Welbrand, C.B., and Made-

line, youngest daughter of Sir Charles Wray, Bart., J.P., M.P., of Ditton Field, Withycomb, in the County of Norfolk.

The advertisement was of interest to me because I know something of Ditton Field. Ikey once had to admit a defeat there. He was not detected; he simply had to give the thing up after five hours' hard work. During those five hours he assured me that he had been within an ace of being shot by spring guns several times over. He came away with absolutely nothing but a sprig of rosemary which, so he said, he had picked in the garden to remember Sir Charles by. He attempted to make the journey back to London without a ticket in a goods truck, and, owing to a miscalculation on his part, was sent fifty miles in the opposite direction before he had a chance to escape. He has always spoken to me with some bitterness of his Ditton Field experiences.

I thought it might be interesting to hear what Ikey had to say on the subject now. I met him coming out of the reading-room, and he began at once. He never fails to read the "Fashionable Intelligence." "And," he said, "the presents will be 'numerous and costly,' as the papers say. The duke, her godfather, is good for a diamond tiara, anyhow, and there is not the ghost of a chance for anybody—not a blooming earthly. Mind, I wouldn't take it or think about taking it if there were. I'm a reformed character, as you know. Still, it is funny to think of all that good stuff

lying about loose in the big billiard-room, 'so near and yet so far,' as the song says."

"Ah, Ikey," I said, "you'd better give up thinking about it. The best way to avoid temptation is to put the subject from one's mind altogether."

"Who's talking about temptation? Look here, Mr. Dix, I might want the moon and I might talk about the moon, but I shouldn't take it. For the same reason I shouldn't take the stuff from that billiard-room. Do you think I don't know? I went back there when the second daughter was married. They'd two detectives in the house for days before, and those wedding presents were never left for one moment day or night. Even if you could get into the house you couldn't do anything, without you chanced making a swinging job of it. No, you needn't get nervous about me, Mr. Dix; you've shown me the error and you can depend on my word that I keep out of it for the future."

I could not in the least depend on his word; indeed, this was only a few months before the time when, under the influence of a little drink, he rejoined his old companions and fell back into evil courses. I said to him now that he would do well to show a less boastful spirit, and pointed out the need of constant watchfulness.

When I got back home I sat down to think the thing out. On the face of it it was clearly a case for drugs. The difficulty would be to administer them. Sir Charles would undoubtedly deal with a first-class firm, and the detectives supplied would be good men. They would go straight to the house on their arrival and probably would not leave it, certainly would not leave the grounds until their work was over. It seemed to me that my only way of getting access to them would be to obtain employment of some kind in Sir Charles's household. This meant the assumption of a disguise, a careful sustaining of a new character and the writing of a few forged testimonials. Frankly, I did not like it.

The disguise and the alias are dan-

gerous weapons and, where they do not succeed perfectly, they damage the man who uses them. It was extremely improbable that I should be able to get a post as an indoor servant; my best chance would be as a groom or common laborer. That would mean that I should have to live and to work as a man of that class would. To all of this I had the strongest objection, but I did not see what else I could do.

About a week before the marriage took place I went down to Withycomb and put up at the hotel there in my own name. They warned me that all their rooms were taken for the night before the wedding, and if I stayed on then I should have to go to the village beer house, a place where I felt sure I should be supremely uncomfortable.

Things were not going well. However, I looked about the place and found an empty cottage standing by itself some distance from the village. It struck me that this would be an ideal spot in which to effect my disguise. The next afternoon I entered that cottage as Constantine Dix, a gentleman from London, interested in geology and on the search for specimens. That was the description I had given of myself at the hotel. The small bag that I carried contained all that I wanted in the way of a disguise. I left the cottage, half an hour later, as William Bradshaw, gardener, highly respectable, but in indifferent health, with a good place to go to in two months' time, and urgently in need of a job to tide him over until then.

Again my bad luck followed me. The Scotch head gardener, a sulky-looking brute, would neither hear my story nor look at my testimonials. He repeated that he didn't want anybody and there was nothing for me. When I lingered and persisted in trying to tell my story, he said that he would give me just one minute to get out of the place and that after that he had a very good terrier. I got out of the place within my minute and I made a mental note of that head gardener. It is not a crime to ask for work, and I had not begged. It seemed to me that

he was a man who should one day have a lesson. I heard afterward that special orders had been given that no strangers were to be allowed to hang about the place under any pretext whatever. Also, I fancy that no servant was ever taken on there without a personal character and a prolonged and searching examination into his past history.

The only thing now before me was to go back to my cottage, resume the character of Mr. Constantine Dix, pay my hotel bill and go home. But I could not bring myself to go just yet. I had taken a good look at the house when I was trying for work there, and I determined to have another look at it that night.

My bedroom at the hotel was on the first floor and gave me a fairly easy chance of coming and going at night without detection. I climbed down from the window at about three the next morning, the rain-water pipe affording me sufficient assistance.

The billiard-room at Ditton Field is a big room, built out by Sir Charles at one side of the house. There are no rooms over it and one end is in view from a narrow country lane. I went down the lane, looked and saw nothing. Not one spark of light came from the window. I was just coming to the conclusion that Ikey had made a mistake and that no watch was kept over the presents at night, when I noticed smoke curling up from the chimney of the room. A fire, then, was burning there, and a fire would not be burning unless someone was sitting up.

The lane comes within ten yards of the end of the billiard-room and the fence offered no difficulties. I went with the utmost caution, feeling for places for my feet with my fingers, to be sure that there were no wires. I did not find anything of the kind, and possibly Ikey exaggerated the dangers he had gone through to cover a clumsy failure.

I came close up to the wall and reached up my hand to the window above me. It was steel-shuttered. Even if there had been no detective

inside it would have been impossible to tackle without burglar's tools, and these I never carry. As my fingers touched the steel I suddenly felt it begin to move under them. I had no time to get away, nor did it seem to me that there was much necessity. I stood close under the window, pressed tight against the wall, and it was a dark night. A man might have opened the window and looked out without seeing me.

Presently a man did look out. The steel shutter moved slowly up, and the light streaming upon the grass showed me a man's shadow. Then the window was pushed up. I could smell coffee and hear the chink of the cup. Presently the man leaned out. I heard a match strike and I could smell his cigarette. He smoked that cigarette out of the window and made it last for twenty minutes, during which time I remained motionless and made no sound. Then, to my great relief, the window was shut and the steel shutter, operated from the inside, came slowly down. I went back to my hotel with the comfortable feeling of a man who, after encountering difficulty and disappointment, at last sees his way clear.

The ascent to my bedroom was not easy, but I managed it without noise or mishap of any kind. Before I went to sleep I reviewed the situation. The billiard-room was left in charge of a detective all night. Once at least in the course of the night he opened the window and renewed the air in the room. That would be quite natural, especially as a close atmosphere would tend to make him sleepy. I felt that I could depend upon it; he might very possibly leave the window open all the time he was there, but ten minutes would be quite enough for me. During those minutes locks and bolts and shutters, for all practical purposes, would have ceased to exist, and it would simply be a question whether he or I were the more intelligent and capable man. Without prejudice I felt assured that I was.

The window in question was something between six-feet-six and seven

feet from the ground. I gathered that at this end of the room was the usual raised platform, and that the top of a table placed on it would come very near to the bottom of the window. I was certain that this was the platform end of the room, because the window at the other end came some three feet lower down, as I had noticed when I was trying to talk to the head gardener. On the table would be placed the detective's refreshments; I should hardly have heard the chink of the cup and smelled the coffee so distinctly if they had been further back in the room. Probably the billiard table would be covered over and the display of presents would already be arranged on it, on the eve of the wedding, in readiness for the reception to follow. I should be able to see into the room, once the shutter was up, either by climbing a tree in the lane ten yards away or on the grass under the window by standing on something that would increase my height—six feet—by one foot. I proposed to drug the detective, either through his cigarette or his coffee. I had not yet decided which, and both presented difficulties. It was clear to me that there was no point in my remaining longer at the hotel, and my absence might tend to avert suspicion. I decided to leave next morning and return on the eve of the wedding on my motor, with my plans completed.

Next day I was back in London buying a few trifles which I required to make clean work of it. Ikey would not have made clean work of it. He would have tried a surprise entry through the window, calculating on frightening the detective into silence with a revolver or overpowering him before he could call or get at the bell-push. And it would not have answered. I fear he would have made, as he said, a swinging job of it. Personally I hate violence; I hate bloodshed. If diamonds could be obtained only by such means I would leave them alone and take something else.

I happen by chance to be tall and broad and of considerable muscular

strength. A man like Ikey has a great admiration for that, says so plainly and turns me sick; I feel as if I were being treated as a prize beast. It has happened sometimes—inevitably, I suppose—in the course of my work among very rough characters that I have had to resort to the lowest methods. It has become necessary for me to get a man out of a room or to hit him hard. One does it if it is necessary, but one might be spared the disgust of being congratulated. The mental qualities are higher. When my mind prevails against the mind of another I feel some satisfaction, but I try to keep myself from that silly vanity which leads to an ambitious and fatal attempt to achieve the impossible. I remember that the spiritual qualities are higher still. Among the worst and the hardest I have picked out now and again the most hopeless case of all. Friends have pleaded with me not to waste my efforts and others have ridiculed me, but I have stuck to my man and, after repeated failures, have brought him to a new life. There lies my spiritual triumph; but that, too, brings me no vanity—only steady submission where struggle is useless—submission to that which is foreordained. For there are some whom we think lost that are meant for the rescue, and there are some—myself among them—who have a good place among men, whose virtues are credited, whose fame is unspotted; and these are to go on to the end without hope. It is a subject to which I had intended hardly to allude and one on which I will not dwell.

I told my housekeeper, Mrs. Pethwick—an elderly but invaluable woman—that I was going to take the motor down to Brighton for a couple of days. She saw that my bag was packed, and I gave her an ordinary leather-covered ink-pot to put in it—one of those that fasten with a couple of springs. The word "Ink" was stamped in gold on the top of it, but the liquid inside was not ink. It looked like it in the ink-pot, but the color was really dark brown. You would have found, on searching my motor-

car, three feet of fine metal tube and an india-rubber bulb, and you would have concluded that they had some connection with the mechanism of the motor; you would have been wrong. I had my big pocket-knife in my pocket. I was starting off to steal diamonds of great value, watched by a detective, and this was all the apparatus I took with me for that purpose. I also took my special cigarette—that cigarette which will be the last I ever put to my lips—but this was for afterward, in case of failure and capture.

I reached Norwich in time for dinner. I admit that it is not essential to take Norwich on the way from London to Brighton, but I had not told Mrs. Pethwick that I was going by the most direct route. I had merely said that I was going to Brighton, and I did go there ultimately.

At dinner, somewhat to the disgust of the waiter, I fear, I drank one bottle of soda-water, and after dinner I slept for an hour in the smoking-room. I was extremely pleased that I was able to get to sleep quite easily. It showed me that my nerves were in good order.

I left the hotel at about ten and drove my car easily along in the direction of Withycomb, which is perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five miles from Norwich. The country about here is not very populous and the inhabitants go to bed early. I felt quite secure in running my motor into a field and leaving it hidden behind a couple of stacks. From this point I went on foot to Ditton Field, taking with me the apparatus which I have already described.

I could see from the lane that the steel shutter of the window of the billiard-room was not quite closed; the lower three inches were open and the window was open behind it. I thought it likely that it would remain like this for the rest of the night. Of course this meant that I could not command a view of the room from a tree in the lane. I had to get to the grass just in front of the window and find something to stand upon which would bring

my eyes on a level with the narrow opening.

I was in no particular hurry, and I explored the place with the greatest care and found in an unlocked potting-shed a solid wine-case, which I thought would serve my purpose. I kept away from the lodge, the gardener's cottage and the house itself as much as possible in case a dog might discover me. Dogs were what I was principally afraid of that night. I do not mean that I was afraid of a dog attacking me; a dog that did that would die before any great harm was done to me. It was the noise that I wished to avoid.

I brought the packing-case up with me to my position in the lane, and from there I watched the narrow strip of light at the bottom of the window for any sign of movement. The night was pitch dark and it had now come on to rain hard. For an hour or more I saw nothing, and then I got a glimpse of a moving hand and a shirt cuff and something that looked to me as if it might be the base of a coffee-pot.

The moment for action had now arrived. I fixed the india-rubber bulb on one end of my long metal tube, dipped the other end into that ink-pot and released the bulb. The tube was now charged with the drug which was to do the work for me. I put my packing-case in position on the grass just in front of the window, with the tube beside it, mounted the case and got my first view of the interior of the room.

At the table near the window sat the detective—a pale young man, with a plaintive eye, who sat munching ham sandwiches in the ruminative manner of an ordinary cow. His cup of innocuous and sleep-dispelling coffee was by his side. The display of presents was already arranged on the billiard-table and other tables in the room. From the position in which I stood it would have been quite easy for me to have reached the coffee-cup with my metal tube, and, by squeezing the bulb, to have discharged the poison into it. But the detective would have

seen me, and the snare should not be laid in sight of the bird. It was necessary for me to attract his attention elsewhere.

I went around to the other end of the billiard-room, opened the nail file in my pocket-knife and drew it once, sharply, across the steel shutter, immediately returning to my position by the opposite window. I had reflected that this course might be disastrous. The detective might have gone straight to the electric bell which would have summoned his comrade. But I was right in supposing that he would be reluctant to disturb his friend's sleep until he knew beyond question that there was some need for him. The sound which I had made on the steel shutter was suspicious and would attract him to that end of the room, but he would wait for something further before he rang.

Looking through the window I could see him at the further end of the room with his back to me, listening intently. He had already got his revolver out. Leisurely, though with proper care, I put one end of my tube through the window till it was immediately over the coffee-cup, and pressed the bulb very slowly and gently. I fancy that a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes must have elapsed before the detective decided that he might return and finish his coffee, and that the sound which he had heard was probably nothing more than a twig of some tree which the wind pushed against the shutter.

After this for awhile things seemed to go very slowly. The detective took his coffee in small sips at considerable intervals. When one has absolutely nothing to do a cup of coffee is an incident. One prolongs it; it breaks the monotony. He finished it at last, lit his pipe and picked up a journal devoted to the interests of the amateur photographer.

The action of a drug depends to some extent on the idiosyncrasy of the person who takes it. With my friend the action was slow, but it came at last. His pipe fell to the floor with a crash

and he sprang to his feet. He had actually been to sleep! He was still drowsy. If he had been wise he would have rung the bell at once.

I now crouched low under the ledge of the window, for I knew what would happen. The steel shutter flew up and the man thrust his head out. The cold night air, he thought, would dispel his sleepiness. He had relighted his pipe. In a few seconds it fell at my feet and his shadow disappeared.

I mounted my packing-case in an instant and saw him trying to make his way to the bell. He swayed and staggered in the intoxication of the drug. As he neared the bell and had his hand out toward it he collapsed, went over and lay like a log.

I waited for a little to see if the noise of his fall had aroused anybody, and then put my hands on the ledge of the window and pulled myself up into the room. My attention was attracted first by a square morocco case, of apparent magnificence and emblazoned with a crest and initials. The card upon it signified that it was the gift of the Duchess of Tadcaster. I opened it and found that it contained six small silver coffee-spoons, total value nine shillings. I could not help writing upon the card that this was really very shabby of Her Grace, and then I got on to serious business, going for diamonds only.

It was without exception the biggest haul I ever made in my life. The mere removal of the stones from their settings took me days of work afterward.

I then turned my attention to the detective. I undid his collar and put him in a better position. He murmured something about being "done for," but I think he was really unconscious and supposed that he was talking to the other detective. I let myself down from the window and went back to the lane.

As I took a last look at the house a police whistle sounded shrilly—I heard the continued whir of more than one electric bell, and window after window sprang into life. I saw, of course, what

had happened. The other detective had entered to take his comrade's place the moment after I had left.

I got out of the lane at once into a field. On these occasions it is always supposed that the burglar will be obliging enough to confine himself strictly to streets or roads or other places patrolled by the police. This is not always the case. I got back to my motor in safety, put my diamonds, roughly tied up in a couple of handkerchiefs, under one of the seats and

started off. As soon as I was in the road I got on to my third speed at once, and after that I felt perfectly secure. A policeman did challenge me, but this was forty miles away, and I think he merely wanted my name and address for exceeding the speed limit. But I was busy at the time and could not stop. Naturally, I was very late in arriving at Brighton, but, as I explained to the old couple who look after my cottage there, the best motor-cars break down sometimes.



A MEMORY

YOU were once the heart of a perfect day,
 Life as a light beat out from you;
 At parting we kissed and you went your way,
 And you waved farewell as you passed from view.

You gave me much and I asked no more,
 For more had shattered the perfect spell;
 It was better to taste of love's sweet lore
 Than drink the wine and the dregs as well.

You cannot change, and you cannot fade,
 As they ever do that we love and hold;
 I have walled my heart lest the world invade,
 But for you I have fashioned a gate of gold.

You come unbidden, forever young,
 And for you I can lay the years aside;
 Unscathed by Time or by Envy's tongue,
 We parted in love—and the world is wide.

P. McARTHUR.



THE CHILD OF TODAY

WILLIE—Mama, can't sister Adele come out and play with me?

WILLIE'S MAMA—Certainly. Just run upstairs and tell her she has worked enough today on her historical novel.

Oct. 1904

A HONEYMOON

(WITH ASIDES)

SHE—Do you love me?

HE—Do I love you? (Great Scott, but I'm getting tired of this.)
You know, dear, how much I love you.

SHE—But do you love me as much as you did? You called me "darling" yesterday, and now it's just "dear."

HE—You silly little goose. (Oh, what a jar! Heavens, have I got to keep up this lovey-dovey business forever?) As if outward expression of *any* sort was adequate to describe my feelings for you. Why, my darling precious little sweetheart, I—

SHE—That's better. Now, kiss me.

HE—There, how's that? (Oh, my, oh, my, I haven't had a smoke for three hours, and there's no prospect of being able to break away.) And that! And that!

SHE—Well, why do you stop?

HE—I wasn't stopping, dearie. (What's the use?) I was only getting my second wind. (Oh, what can I do to sneak away for a little rest? Let me see.) By Jove, that reminds me.

SHE—Of what? I hope it's of me.

HE—Oh, of course. (Isn't this fierce? Why, I can't even take a vacation in my mind.) Yes, it was of you, pet, in a way. The fact is, I haven't got our return tickets yet. (Now for a quiet hour by myself.)

SHE—Must you get them now?

HE—Oh, yes, sweetie. ("Sweetie" is a new one. Hope she notices it.) The seats must be secured at once, you know.

SHE—Then I will go with you.

HE—(The deuce!) But, my honey-jam (there's another!), can you stand the walk? It's several blocks, and they're long ones, too. (I begin to see my finish!)

SHE—But why walk, darling? Why not get a carriage? You know we can drive slow, and pull down the blinds.

HE—(Well, there doesn't seem to be any rest for the weary. And if any man needs a change, I do. Three weeks now of lovey-dovey! My, but this is wearying.) Why, that's so, my peacherine! I hadn't thought of that. I'll run right downstairs and order a carriage at once. (It will take ten minutes anyway without arousing her suspicions. That will give me a breathing spell.)

SHE—You cruel, horrid thing!

HE—(Now I'm up against it again!) Why, precious pet, what do you mean?

SHE—I just *know* you don't love me.

HE—(Now wouldn't that jar you!) But, darling, what have I done?

SHE—Why, don't you know you can *ring* for a carriage?

HE—(I'm in for it now!) Why, sure! Of course. Why didn't I think of it before?

SHE (*tapping him gently on the cheek*)—Well, never mind. But now, you careless, forgetful boy, you'll have to make it up to me.

HE—(What's the use?) Of course, sweetmeat! What now?

SHE—I shall expect you to kiss me one thousand times without stopping!

HE—(And all I've got to look forward to is a lifetime of this!) Yes, sugar-plum!

A LAND A GREAT WAY OFF

By Zona Gale

THE Juliet of that night's performance tapped her cardboard check impatiently on the window of the baggage-master's office.

"Please," she said again, with a little offended intonation, "I am in a great hurry. It's a big gray canvas one, with a strap."

The baggage-master caressed his forehead with the back of his hand, wrinkling his face horribly.

"You know, miss," he observed, "the trunk hain't been settin' here waitin' your arrival; nor no more hev I. You can't expect——"

A sympathetic sniff from Jerry, the great, grinning savage who was assistant at the little Sun Prairie station, caused his chief to lift his eyes. They met those of Miss Cressida Tower, who was the Juliet, and the baggage-master faltered. Such big, tired, lit-from-within eyes she had that other people before him had faltered no less obviously. The chief turned on his lounging aide.

"Look alive, Jerry!" he called in a terrible voice. "Wot's your business w'en the lady says a big gray one, with a strap?"

A moment later the baggage-master was pointing a deferential, corduroy finger in the direction of the hotel.

"We'll have it down to the John Calhoun House in a half-hour, miss," he promised with the condescension of an oracle. Then he looked after the Juliet as she walked down the hot board sidewalk.

"Member of the Great Casino and Lyceum All-Star Repertory," he deduced.

The Great Casino and Lyceum All-

Star Repertory Company boasted no advance-agent, no press-agent and no business manager. Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone stood for all three officials and was the Romeo and the Brutus and the Claude Melnotte and the Armand, as exigency demanded. It chanced that Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone was, at the moment, not on friendly terms with the leading woman named in the iron-bound contract which she held with him. Consequently, when he arrived at the desk of the John Calhoun and found that hostelry already nearly filled by the delegates to the Sun Prairie Methodist County Conference, he engaged the remaining rooms for himself and the minor members of his company, and congratulated himself upon having neatly inconvenienced the leading woman.

When Miss Cressida Tower, therefore, eventually reached the hotel she was told by a faint, polite clerk that there was not a room in the house. He followed her to the door, thumbs in the armholes of his oilcloth waistcoat.

"Why don't you try Mis' Ephraim Meadows?" he inquired argumentatively.

Miss Tower expressed her weary willingness; and who, she asked, might Mis' Meadows be? Mis' Meadows might be a widow-woman, the clerk made answer, who took roomers since the Sun Prairie City Bank had suspended; four blocks up and one over, house with the lilacks.

Miss Tower gave directions about her trunk and hurried away. It was four o'clock, and the lining of Juliet's cloak was torn and one of the tinsel

lilies on the friar's cell gown was raveling out. She must mend those before the performance. She wondered if they had found the balcony rail yet; the last time she had played the scene she had had to look down at Romeo in the garden from a balcony so abrupt that it resembled a fire-escape.

A great breath of fragrance suddenly swept her face, and a long line of purple lilacs nodded to her. This was the "house with the lilacs" then—this little box of a house, with a faintly greening curtain of vines and a faintly greening square of lawn and—yes, a little painted fountain. She caught her breath with delight, and lifted the gate-latch. A great golden-eyed collie stepped down the walk to meet her, a canary was singing from the porch, a workman was mending the side fence and whistling with pleasant monotony.

"Oh," said Miss Tower as she pulled the jangling bell, "she won't have any room for me, either. It's too nice here."

But Mrs. Meadows had a room. Her face—tired, kindly, without surprise—smiled on almost without her knowledge as she talked. It was a front corner room, and it was sunny, and there was hardly any noise from the side alley. Dear, no, she did not object to taking an actress. The young gentleman that had had the room was a musician himself; yes, indeed, he played the fiddle in the orchestra at the opera house. He was just moving into the back room, and his pictures were not all out yet, if she didn't mind that? She might come right in and right up and look at the room. It could be got ready in no time.

White walls, white bed, spotless white woodwork and cream-colored matting made the room a very practical heaven to the travel-worn little Juliet. She threw off her hat and leaned joyously out of the open window, watching the shy May shadows on the lawn, hearing the workman's whistle and the swallows overhead. And Sun Prairie had been selected as only a one-night stand! Usually a convention town

was a gold mine, but Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone had learned that this convention was a conference and had booked at the Sun Prairie Opera House for only one night. Ah, well! this was the one night and she would make the most of it.

Mrs. Meadows was busily removing a pair of foils and a few photographs from the mantel.

"They belong to the young gentleman that's just movin'," she explained easily, wiping the glass of a picture in a little black frame. The face caught Miss Tower's eye, and she went nearer and looked at it curiously. It was the face of a young girl whose simple, low-cut bodice might have been of any period, yet the photograph had the unmistakable mark of a bygone time. The young face was crowned by braids of brown hair and lighted by wonderful eyes. "From Mother to her Dear Boy" was written below. Miss Tower held it for a moment, enviously struggling against the memory of her own mother as she had last seen her—rouged and with bobbing skirts and bobbing curls, in the back row of the chorus.

"Poor mother," she thought, "poor Mademoiselle Fadette! I wonder what her own mother looked like? But I—I've been started without my chance. Why, I—no wonder I never got an engagement in town—started that way, without my chance!"

When the room was quiet Miss Tower leaned idly at the window, awaiting her trunk. Dressing-rooms were only brusquely and casually considered in the building of the Sun Prairie Opera House, as in all the one-night-stand theatres in that Western State. Also, there was no stage entrance, and those who assembled early might see the players arrive by way of the main doors and, laden with costumes, hurry down a side aisle to the big swinging door. Side seats were considered choice because they offered such a superior view of the same swinging door, opening between acts to emit an odor of mingled lamp smoke and tableau powder as the star and the

"heavy" came out to visit the Sun Prairie Opera House Buffet and Café. Hence the Great Casino and Lyceum All-Star Repertory Company did not think of having its trunks sent to the theatres upon which it descended.

Sitting on the floor by the low south window of Mrs. Meadows's cottage, Miss Tower drew the pins from her hair and let it fall about her shoulders. She leaned against the casement, the warm air fanned her face, bees hung above the lilacs, the little attenuated fountain tinkled in its stucco basin, and lulled by surroundings such as she had not known in years Miss Tower, still facing the homely glory of the garden, presently fell asleep. And so it was that, coming briskly home from the violin lesson which he had been giving, Arnold West, who had just vacated the front room at Mrs. Meadows's, saw her.

The window was not high, and the wistaria framed its picture charmingly. Arnold watched, spellbound. Who was she—here in Sun Prairie, and at Mrs. Meadows's? He demanded this of Mrs. Meadows breathlessly, when he met her on the stairs. Cressida Tower, the Juliet of that night's performance—the performance at which, as usual, he was to play first violin in the orchestra! He went to his room, and his hands were trembling.

"Oh," he warned himself, "but she will have the same dreadful voice that they all have! What are you hoping for?"

He hurried to put on his worn "best" clothes, and rushed from his room, expecting he hardly knew what. In the hall he met Jerry bearing the "gray trunk, with a strap." As Arnold went down the path on his way to dinner at the hotel, his violin case under his arm, he saw that the muslin curtains of his old room were drawn.

"Nonsense," he said to himself, impatiently as before, "her voice is sure to be frightful. What are you thinking of?"

"Alice West's boy," as Sun Prairie knew him, was "doing for himself" as bookkeeper in the little bank since his mother died, and giving violin lessons

to the high-school professor's daughter, and playing first violin in the orchestra. He was a delicate lad, hardly twenty, with a face fresh for all its sadness, and a mouth as sensitive as his long, fair hands. In spite of his reserve, in spite of his unconquerable aloofness, he was shyly loved by the rough, kindly people who had loved his mother, a hard-working little seamstress. Even though he was known to go to the upland and play on his violin alone at night, no one thought him really mad, for his mother's sake. Yet a young stranger schoolmaster who had been caught red-handed declaiming poetry in Dates's Grove was looked at askance until he was supplanted, to the relief of the Sun Prairie mothers. Even Mrs. Meadows, without Arnold suspecting it, lost a dollar a month on the room which he occupied, and lost it cheerfully.

"Alice West never stented me in her time," she would say. "Often she's set and sewed over-hours for me to get somethin' done. An' I ain't the one to forget it with her boy."

At Miss Tower's urgent request Mrs. Meadows consented to serve her with supper that night, so that the little actress did not leave the house until time to go to the theatre. Then great Lallie Marshall, the character man—Laurien Marchiel on the play-bills—lounged around to help her carry her costumes and make-up box.

"Mighty mean of Marley to play you that trick," said Mr. Marshall sympathetically, as he closed the gate and gathered up a dragging tassel.

"What—to make me come here?" asked Miss Tower in surprise. "Oh, Lallie! I've loved it! Look back."

Mr. Marshall glanced back at the little white cottage and its purple forest of lilacs. The moon was showing low and red in the warm dusk.

"You're a queer one, Cress," he said. "Why, the hotel's a bird. Bathroom on every floor."

Arnold West, waiting by the opera house door, saw the two arrive. He scanned Miss Tower's face breathlessly. She was a little blue, simply

clad figure, with a cheap sailor hat set on her glorious hair. But Arnold's eyes rested gratefully on the small features and unrouged cheeks. He heard her full contralto voice as she passed. There had never been a woman like her in any company that had come to Sun Prairie since he had played first violin. The others had been creatures of loud voices, high in favor with the incredible men of the troupe. But she! And her name was Cressida. Arnold's hands were trembling again as he tried the strings of his instrument. They trembled as he drew his bow over them in the thin, sweet notes of the overture. Jefferson B. Marlybone, donning the cotton velvet of the Montagues, stopped and listened.

"Gad!" he said. "Some poor devil with an ear got himself buried alive in Sun Prairie."

When the curtain arose on the palace of Verona, Arnold sat in a fever of impatience. He had read the play a hundred times—Alice West's boy had a little shelf of his mother's well-thumbed books—and he noted gratefully the immoderate cuts which the text had suffered, since they hastened the appearance of Juliet. When at last she came, in her tawdry blue frock, her abundant hair about her shoulders, and when the boy in the orchestra heard again her clear, low voice, which all her bad training could not harm, he closed his eyes in a sudden access of something like pain. For he knew her—that she was not of the race of the others, knowing too much of the world, nor yet of the Sun Prairie women, knowing nothing of the world; but a woman with wonderful hair and voice, who spoke the words, he thought, as if she loved them. Poor Arnold had no wish to judge her as Juliet; he could not have gauged her simple art if he would; he was only overwhelmingly conscious of a star within his own barren orbit at last.

Cressida saw the boy in the orchestra. He was a noticeable figure, his pale distinction flowering from the red-faced German musicians about him. The fashion in which his great eyes fol-

lowed her through the piece pleased her. Once she smiled at him, and Arnold went cold and faint, and then the blood surged to his face and he sat breathless, hungering for another look from her. The absurdity of his young self in the village orchestra going mad over a girl in a strolling company did not occur to him. For the first time in his life his delicate, detached humor forsook him, and he lived the moments as if they were the first moments of his life.

When the curtain went down and left her lying in her tinsel gown in the tomb, the boy, with streaming eyes, groped for his violin case and stumbled somehow from the theatre. It must be remembered that Arnold was barely twenty, and in his life he had never seen a beautiful woman—a woman with the beauty that has been awakened—the beauty that does not lie asleep, and dies at last as he had seen it die on the faces of the women in Sun Prairie. The boy—sensitive, high-strung, unconsciously attuned to all beauty—was profoundly moved, and he offered no resistance to the new, enthralling force that possessed him.

He hovered at the door, a little apart from the other stragglers, and watched her leave the place, Benvolio, who was Mr. Marshall again, carrying her burden. She moved up the moon-swept street, Arnold following in ecstasy to know that the same roof would shelter them. Of the morrow, when she would be gone, he dared not think. He waited until he had seen her safely admitted to the cottage and Mr. Marshall had swung away down the street. Then he went softly into the garden and stole away from the path, over the glittering grass, and threw himself in the shadow of the lilacs near the little fountain, where he could watch her window. It remained dark for several minutes. Then, to his great joy, the curtains parted and he saw her lean from the casement in the bright spring moonlight.

It had been a very long time since Cressida had looked from a window over a garden when the moon was

shining. Yet she remembered herself, a shy, thin, lonely little child in her one year at school, stealing from her bed to stand in the square of moonlight that poured through the uncurtained dormitory window, and she remembered how Sister Elizabeth had carried her to bed with a gentle reproof. The moon was made to put one to sleep, Cressida remembered that Sister Elizabeth had said. And she recalled another time, when she was taking dancing lessons, and a poor young poet, who lived on the floor above, had come into her life. Three times a week he would walk home with her from the professor's to her mother's lodging—the lodging of Mademoiselle Fadette. And on those nights sometimes the moon was already shining over the little park they crossed. She could see her young poet now, footing silently beside her, his hat carried in his hand, the moon softening his tired young face. Ah, the things that he had taught her to see—and what were they? she wondered suddenly, looking out over the feathery purple of the lilacs. But she had forgotten; how could she, poor and overworked, remember how the boy-poet had taught her to *notice* the night, star-lit or softly dark or moon-white, as it chanced, and to take account of its beauty as the busy and the pre-occupied take account of rain? He had taught her to live the moments that she was hurrying to her lesson and home again, thus respecting the out-of-doors as she respected the very walls of her ugly home; he had taught her to read about these things, too, and had laughed at her for confession of “skipping the descriptions” when she read, and he had taught her to say soft, musical verses that rested her when she was weary beyond belief. In the end she had regretfully to tell him that to share his little attic room and to learn more of the magic that he had to teach would be very wonderful, but that she meant to be rich and great instead.

Rich and great! Oh, the faint little fountain falling in its painted

basin—how it stood for the splendor that she had meant to have for her own!—vague splendor, in which figured fountains and terraces, and she in trailing gowns moving about among blossoms, forever young and beautiful and devotedly admired. Instead, there had been hard work, ghastly, unspeakable drudgery, and journeys without comfort, and cheap theatres and—Marley.

As she remembered these things, looking down on the white green and the dim lilacs and the shining ribbon of water, she was seized by a whimsical desire. She had acted for other people a very long time now; why should she not, this once, act for herself? There was the fair little lawn, there were the blossoming trees and falling water, refined by the night and their unfamiliarity into positive grandeur. And here—across her trunk—lay the white-and-tinsel Juliet gown, why should she not pretend, for an hour, that the world had gone her way?

Smiling, she slipped off the cheap blue frock, and in a moment stood in Juliet's long white gown, embroidered with silver lilies. She shook down her hair and bound it about with her chain of white beads, and then she went softly down the stairs and out the door which Mrs. Meadows had adjured her to leave open for Arnold. She stepped out in the full whiteness of the moon, beating down on the glittering grass, and crossed to the fountain.

Arnold, lying in the shadow of the lilacs, watched her as if she were an apparition from the world of his dream of her. She sat on the edge of the fountain's low basin, and the moon caught the white of the beads in her hair and the silver in her gown and the whiteness of her teeth as she smiled at her whim. The strangeness of her appearance there in that attire did not even occur to him. She was Juliet; why should she not be there in white and silver, with a net of pearls in her hair? Then the boy boldly left the shadow of the lilacs and stood before her, his violin in his hand.

"Please, don't be frightened," he said; "I live here, too."

"Oh," said Cressida, startled, but at once recognizing the delicate face from the orchestra, "I know! I saw your mother's picture."

Arnold's face lighted.

"Did you?" he cried. "Did Mrs. Meadows show you? I am so glad."

He moved a little away from her, hesitating.

"Sit down!" cried Cressida briskly, waving him to the edge of the fountain beside her. "Let's talk, shall we? So you are glad I saw your mother's picture. Why is that?"

In any other surroundings Arnold would have shrunk instinctively from her words, but now he hardly noted them or was conscious of her manner. Was not her voice full and low, and was she not Juliet? He threw his hat on the grass and laid his violin beside it, and sat where she bade him.

"Well," he answered, not daring to look at her, "I always like her to see anything beautiful I have seen."

Cressida stared a moment.

"Upon my word," she said, "that's pretty, now."

The boy flushed and took something from his pocket.

"I had her picture there with me tonight," he said shyly, holding it toward her. "I saw you at the window, asleep, when I came home, and I wanted her to see."

Cressida stretched out her hand for the picture in its little black frame.

"What a nice idea!" she said gently.

Arnold stole a shy, breathless glance at her. Her face still wore the red and white of its stage make-up, but the moon softened it to beauty. The hand that held the picture flashed with rings. Her hair was loosened and fell about her neck. The long straight lines of the Juliet gown, the girl's slimness, the rainbow ribbon of water flashing over her head and the white, white moon—these intoxicated him.

All the fancy and dream in his hungry little heart, so long stifled at its bookkeeping, so long outraged in

the scraping orchestra, suddenly flowered in the moment. And all the little spirits of shadow and light wind drew near him, as is their custom when there is the slightest hope of weaving themselves into dreams and spells. It was these, perhaps, that made the boy suddenly bold.

"You look beautiful," he said shyly; "like a princess. Do you mind my telling you? I couldn't help it, somehow."

Cressida stared.

"Not a bit of it," she returned cordially, and was suddenly embarrassed by the boy's clear look, and she glanced down at her gown with a laugh that was almost awkward.

"It must look right silly," she said, "these things, out here in the wet grass!"

"The whole world ought to dress like that," declared Arnold, and remembered a party at the professor's when he had sat on a balcony with the professor's daughter, who wore a high-throated, starched muslin gown. How could he have thought her beautiful?

"I came out here where it's cool," pursued Cressida, haunted by some demand for explanation.

The boy longed to have her know that he understood why she really came.

"Oh," he cried boldly, "no, you didn't! You came out here because you love the moon and the night and the—the differentness!"

Cressida looked about her.

"Well," she admitted, with a laugh, "maybe. I like it, I guess, because it lets me pretend. As if I didn't have pretending enough to do on the stage!"

"No," cried Arnold earnestly, "nobody can do pretending enough. It's the nicest thing in the world."

"When you're hungry?" asked the actress sharply.

"When you're lonely," said the boy simply. "I do it all the time. I'm doing it now."

"You are. Well, what are you pretending I am?" asked Cressida dubiously.

"Why, you are just you, of course,"

returned Arnold seriously, "but I am pretending I'm a great musician, with the world at my feet, and I've brought it to you—out here in the garden. And I've come to play to you besides," he finished, surprised at his own courage.

"What a nice idea!" she said again. "And you're going to take me away on a yacht, with a lot of jolly people, aren't you? Well, play for me then—really, play for me. Let's wake the old town up."

Arnold took up his case readily.

"I can play softly," he said; "I often do, out here. No one seems to be disturbed."

He stood up by the lilacs, the moon on his face, and played to her softly, softly, as one who plays and listens in dreams.

Cressida listened. It immensely pleased her instinct for the dramatic. When the boy began she glanced quickly about, with a little breath of content, and reflected that this was quite the nicest thing that had happened to her since Marley had taken her to the carnival ball and she had worn her Magda gown.

The notes of the violin were threaded on the thin under-harmony of the falling water and the light wind. The music was not the voice of the night. It was rather the voice of some heart, stronger than the night, and at such piercingly beautiful speech the night was quiet, hushing its own manifold little voices.

Gradually the girl forgot the mere novelty of the hour and became absorbed in its beauty. What did all this remind her of? she wondered. Nothing beautiful and lost, for she had had nothing beautiful in her life; unless— For the second time that night her mind went back to the young poet whom she had known. In some strange way the night and the violin reminded her of him. She wondered vaguely if he, too, had played the violin; but he had not, she remembered, and it was not that he looked like Arnold, either; yet the thought of him and his words persistently stirred

in her heart. What was it that he used to tell her? If she could only remember! There had been something about a land a great way off—something about a land a great way off. And there were things which he used to tell her were dearer than the splendor that she longed for—love, of course, for one thing; people always said that, she reflected; and books—perhaps it was books; only so much of all books was stupid! And as for music—but she could not sit always and listen to music. What could it have been? Something about a land a great way off!

The playing ceased, and Arnold came back to the fountain, breathing quickly. He threw himself down and looked up into her face. Perhaps he knew, she thought suddenly, what it was that the poor young poet used to tell her about. She bent toward him eagerly.

"There is something," she said uncertainly, "that I think of and want when you play, and I think I have been told what it is, but I can't remember. It's nothing about being good—that is tiresome, and this that I mean is beautiful. It's—it's like something you've dreamed about, and remember when you first wake up, and then forget. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes," cried Arnold radiantly; "I know! I know!"

"Tell me," she cried breathlessly, and he hardly knew that he took both her hands as he sat looking up in her wonderful eyes.

"You mean," cried Arnold, "the sort of life that two people know about who care more for this sort of thing—this hour that we are having now, than for anything in the world, and who have this same joy in their hearts, no matter how hard they work, or how tired they get, or what stupid people they have to be with. It's *being* all the time just what you are when the moon is this way, and the lilacs smell like this. Oh, I knew that you knew! Tell me that you do know!"

Cressida's forehead moved in a little

frown; her eyes were wide and earnest, but her look was undeniably puzzled. She shook her head and groped out with one hand.

"It's all in the air," she said; "I can't touch it, somehow. I think I know now. But tomorrow—tomorrow when we catch the seven-ten for Barlo's Centre, and the trunks don't get down in time, and Marley's cross—what then?"

"There'll be this to remember," cried the boy triumphantly, "and to keep on having."

"That was the way I tried to keep the carnival ball in my head," said Cressida thoughtfully. "When I was tired next day I tried to remember the lights, and the champagne, and the way the men flattered, and how I danced on the——"

She caught herself abruptly, with a quick glance at the boy.

"I suppose it isn't the same," she muttered, "but that didn't work."

In the boy's heart was a great wave of sympathy and strange joy. Why, this woman loved the beautiful things in the world as he did, and she was infinitely wiser and cleverer, and yet she was losing everything. In that instant the boy felt the man's longing to protect her, and, too, the boy's reverence for her.

"Oh," he said, "listen! listen! You are so beautiful! I loved you when I saw you there this afternoon, asleep in the window. And now that I know what you are"—her eyes scanned his face and withdrew—"I dare to tell you, because I worship you. I have a little money—only a little, but it will help us till my music begins to bring in more. Stay here—stay—and let us live here, and learn together the things that we want to know about—and let me teach you what it is you dream of when I play."

Cressida looked at the exquisite, trembling face so near her own, and she bent suddenly and kissed it, because she did whatever it was her impulse to do. The fresh young lips met hers and the fresh young cheek was laid against her own. Oh, was this

what the music had said? Just for a moment the spell lay upon her; then she remembered. To break her contract with Marley would serve him right—that almost tempted her; but to break her contract that she might stay in Sun Prairie—in Sun Prairie! And yet, why not? Here was peace, and here was the house with the lilacs where she had longed to stay, and here was this eager, beautiful boy, and his love—and here was the spell of that other unknown thing, the spell of the land that is a great way off. Why not? She crushed his hands together fiercely, and something hard lay beneath them. It was his mother's picture—the picture of Alice West, whose boy was placing himself in her keeping.

"You!" she cried to him suddenly, "what of you? I've never thought of anybody but myself in my life. What of you?"

Arnold smiled—the confident, pitiful smile of young hope.

"I!" he cried magnificently, "I love you!"

But the woman knew; though whether it was that she grew sentimental in the spell of the moon, or that the old life called her, or that the black-framed picture of Alice West rebuked her, she never knew. But she rose with a little indulgent laugh.

"Come," she said, "I'm cold, and I have an early start tomorrow. You are delightful—but it's late."

Arnold struggled to his feet.

"What do you mean?" he cried, his face quite white.

She spoke to him with sudden gentleness.

"See," she said, "I have a long contract to fill. It would be dishonorable to break that—wouldn't it, now?"

"Yes," said Arnold, quietly enough.

"I'll let you hear of me sometimes," she said. "No—not from me; you can't think how I spell—but of me. Now, good-bye—and thank you for tonight. You almost made me remember what it is I think of when you play."

Arnold lay face downward under the lilacs until the moon had set. In the chill and dark of early dawn he groped to his room, hugging his violin. A few hours later he heard Jerry in the hall with her trunk and then he heard her step, and though Mrs. Meadows was garrulous on the stairs, he could not catch a tone of the voice that he longed to hear.

Cressida went out past the fountain and the lilacs to the village street, which was early astir for the sake of its departing delegates. A few steps from Mrs. Meadows's gate she came back and gathered a plume of lilac from the bush that overhung the fence. She drew in its deep breath.

"What was it that I thought of when he played?" she wondered again. "When I smell this I can almost remember, too."

On the station step stood Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone, his hand in his checked waistcoat pocket, his face

aglow with the satisfaction of a successful booking.

"Come here a minute," he bade Cressida, with a backward motion of his head and a lift of his black eyebrows. "Look here, now," he went on confidentially, "hasn't this gone on far enough, Cress? Aren't you about willing to make it up?"

"Willing enough," replied Cressida indifferently.

"Call bygones done-withs?" he insisted facetiously.

"All right," said Cressida.

"Well, then, that's better," said the manager comfortably. "I ain't the one to bear a grudge, and you've had your side. What's the matter—little tired? Well, we'll have to have a quiet little dinner tonight—eh?"

"All right," said Cressida again.

"Give us a flower to bind the bargain?" he added, laying thumb and forefinger on the plume of lilac on her coat.

"No!" cried Cressida passionately.



ANTONY

ABOVE old Egypt shadowy,
As though from Cleopatra's lips,
There floats a whisper—"Antony."

By Nilus stands the date-palm tree;
O'er level plains the slow sun dips
Above old Egypt shadowy.

A sound of Bacchic revelry;
And past the shades of Time's eclipse,
There floats a whisper—"Antony."

The Sphinx looks on a sandy sea;
From distant heights a lone star slips
Above old Egypt shadowy.

Still echoes Cleopatra's plea;
While, like as Hybla's honey drips,
There floats a whisper—"Antony."

And still as ghostly lovers flee
And vanished are the Roman ships,
Above old Egypt shadowy
There floats a whisper—"Antony."

ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

THE SEARCH

WHERE great souls sat with wisdom rife
 She questioned wistfully,
 "Where shall I find that joy of life
 That once was part of me?"

"That put the singing on my lips,
 The dancing in my feet,
 The kisses on my finger-tips
 To throw to all things sweet?"

"I know not when it went away—
 No word it gave nor sign;
 I only know 'twas mine one day,
 And now no more is mine."

They smiled above her discontent,
 The wondrous souls and wise;
 "Find us the path the first spring went
 When winter gloomed the skies.

"Find us the way the dead dreams go,
 The road Love journeys on
 What time he turns before we know
 Or guess that he is gone.

"And when you find these paths in truth,
 These divers ways and crossed,
 Then shall you find the road to Youth
 Whereon your joy is lost."

Oh, many, many paths there be;
 Think you she found that one
 Whereon her joy of life strays free
 And singing in the sun?"

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



TRUE

COBBLE—Do you think the time will ever come when we will forget how to walk?

STONE—Well, I don't know. We are perfectly safe as long as we have automobiles.

HERALDIC HUMORS AND ERRORS

By F. J. Knight Adkin

MANY an epitaph has been written on the death of "Chivalrie," scarce one to chronicle the decease of the science of Heraldry, which lent so much romance to the days of joust and tourney. The young man who, five centuries ago, would have stood disgraced as an uneducated boor for confounding the terms "pallet" and "pellet," if reincarnated today might, without rebuke, describe a "talbot rampant azure" as a "blue dog on its hind legs."

The herald, whose person, college and art were once almost superstitiously revered as objects which it was sacrilege to abuse and iconoclasm to maltreat, now often becomes a tool in the vainglorious hand of those who, wishing to decorate their carriage doors appropriately, forget the advice inscribed in 1662 on George Walton's tomb at Little Burstead, Essex:

Plain coates are noblest; though ye vulgar
eye,
Take Joseph's for the best in Herauldry.

In this matter, however, "a little learning is a dangerous thing," as may be instanced in the case of a certain parvenu in England. Happening to have the same name as a well-known and noble family, he paid his fees to the Herald's College, and requested a grant of the same arms; the College naturally insisted on making a slight change, "for difference." He accepted their decision and forthwith proudly flaunted, over his gateway and on his plate, the famous coat of arms, crossed by the "scarpe sinister"—a mark of illegitimacy!

While on this subject it may be well to correct a very popular and widespread error; namely, that the "bar sinister" is a mark of illegitimate descent. In the first place, to speak of a "bar" as being from the right or left is absurd, since it runs to and from both sides of the shield; again, the "bend sinister" is a perfectly honorable charge, though often mistaken for the "scarpe" which is half, or the "baton," which is one-quarter, of its width, and does not touch the sides of the shield; as both of the latter imply a stain on the family honor.

It is not generally known that, although those who have acquired arms by "assumption" are very justly ridiculed, technically they are quite within their rights, on the authority of that cornerstone of the science, "The Boke of St. Albans"; provided the arms are heraldically correct and not exact copies of any existing coat.

In cases of this kind, however, the enterprising "armiger" usually oversteps his rights, by adopting an ancestor who "came over with William the Conqueror." Why he should thus modestly stop at the eleventh century it is difficult to see, when many of the old Welsh genealogists inserted a note in the middle of their table to the effect that "about this time Adam was made."

Indeed, Dame Juliana Berners goes further and describes Adam's coat-armor as "a shield gules, upon which the arms of Eve, a shield argent, were quartered, as an escutcheon of pretense, she being an heiress."

The good dame does not take upon herself to explain the why and where-

fore of her last remark, but goes on to tell how as a punishment, after the fall, Adam is compelled to bear the ignominious shield "*paly tranche*, divided in every way and tintured of every color"; a much more difficult design, be it noticed, for Eve to embroider on a fig-leaf garment.

Without a touch of profanity, Nicholas Ferne, too, ascribes crests and arms to most of the Biblical characters. Among others, he mentions that "the apostles were also gentlemen of bloud."

Whether this fact materially assisted their position after death is a matter of conjecture; for, on the authority of Dionysius, the Areopagite, first bishop of Athens, it is stated that social distinctions exist in heaven much as they do on earth, the angels being classed as Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels or Angels. Imagine the chagrin of a royal duke on finding himself created a mere "Archangel," while his butler takes precedence of him with the full distinctions of a "Power"! It would be well, however, to think twice before accepting this theory as a belief; in fact, Casaubon, with the candid directness which has been the hallmark of the critic for all time, denounces those who are sufficiently credulous to do so, as "asses."

Heywood, however, in 1635, taking the risk of this undignified appellation, published a kind of celestial "Burke" called "The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells," in which he enumerates their names, orders and offices. The great Calvin dismisses this work as "*mera garrulitas*" (nonsensical chatter); while Nares sarcastically suggests that the author went to heaven and then returned, in order that the world in general might benefit by his experiences.

In spite of all these fantastic conceits, it is certain that a rude style of heraldry did exist in very early times. The arms of the Grecian emperors are described on trustworthy evidence as "a cross between four bouncing B's." (How these alphabetical gymnastics

were performed is left entirely to the imagination.) These letters were supposed to be the initials of Greek words meaning, "King of Kings, reigning over Kings." Selden argues the impossibility of such extreme majesty; "though German civilians would fain have it otherwise," was the pertinent remark of Archdeacon Nares a century ago; he also implies an "odious comparison" when he adds that ancient emperors liked to style themselves gods. It is of interest to notice how little change a hundred years makes in the characteristics of a nation.

The fanciful devices by which men and families were distinguished are not confined by any means to the civilized races of the earth; the potentates and head men of nearly all savage races claim kinship with some bird or animal, frequently tracing their device on pottery, dwellings and clothing or even on their own bodies. Their war cries also have a parallel in our mottoes, many of which originated from the same source; this accounts in some instances for a seemingly senseless sentence, such as the Dakinses' of Derbyshire, "Strike Dakyns, the Devil's in the Hemp."

The point is a little more evident in the motto of that ancient and cross-legged fraternity, the Merchant Tailors, "*Sit merita laus*." The "merry tailors," however, refused either to "sit" or stand such levity, and had it altered to its present form. This they had every right to do, though many people believe the motto to be as difficult to alter as the crest or coat of arms.

But while everyone has a right to assume whatever word or sentence he likes, it is advisable to use some discretion, lest one fall into the same plight as a certain funeral outfitter who had a coat of arms made to order when he attained to the dignity of alderman. As a finishing touch, some wag added for a motto the word "*Suscipio*" (I undertake), which formed an unconscious advertisement of the owner's profession on his private notepaper.

This is hardly a surprising mistake

when one remembers the general disregard exhibited toward the science. How few Americans, born and bred, would recognize the description, "A shield argent, charged with six pallets gules; on a chief azure, thirty-eight stars of the first," as the emblem of the United States, one of the most simple and beautiful of all emblems.

Simplicity, nevertheless, is not a leading feature in all American arms. For instance, the only possible way to blazon the arms of Kansas would be as follows: "Two ox-teams and wagons between a man plowing in sinister foreground, and Indians hunting buffalo in dexter middle distance; on sinister a double-funneled and hurricane-decked steamer; behind mountains in distance, sun rising; on sky in half-circle, thirty-seven stars; all proper. Motto, *Ad astra per aspera*."

Speaking of heraldry in America, Mr. Cussans calls attention to a fact which may be verified seven days in the week by a walk along Fifth avenue; how among the passing carriages he noticed many which bore arms to which the owners had no right, while an equal number bore monograms where a crest or coat of arms might justly have been blazoned. He goes on to quote an anecdote told by Mr. Crampton, who was once British Minister at Washington. It seems that he imported a brougham from England, and on visiting a carriage-builder some time later found a miscellaneous collection of vehicles ornamented with his own arms. On making inquiries he learned that several citizens who "liked the pattern" had had it copied.

These mishaps will continue to occur until some kind of a college is formed to manage the heraldic system of the United States, which is as genuine and complete as that of any European nation.

Being free from the trammels of a peerage, however, such a body would not have to authorize rules for conversation with noble persons, such as are set down in the two hundred and fourth number of *The Tatler*, which

affirms that the title "his lordship" must be used only for dignified purposes. For instance, though one may speak of "his lordship's favor or judgment," it would be an error of taste to mention "his lordship's thumb, wig, cane or great toe."

Many people place a blind trust in their stationer or monumental mason to turn out their armorial bearings correctly. The result is sometimes extraordinary, not to say extra-natural. One statuary, who was required to design a tomb, copied the arms from a tablet erected to the memory of the grandfather of the deceased; the latter thus went down to posterity as a bachelor, aged ten years, married to his own grandmother, which lady had departed to a better land some forty years before his birth.

It is some satisfaction to remember that genealogical forgeries are not confined to modern days. Some centuries ago they took place on a far larger scale. In the twelfth century an imposition was attempted which, though it may be condemned on the ground of its colossal impudence, is entitled to a certain respect by reason of the overwhelming patriotism displayed in its inception.

It happened as follows: One Geoffrey of Monmouth, an English friar, being a learned man, had taken a deep interest in Greek and Roman histories, and became exceedingly jealous of their grand records, stretching back into the vagueness of primeval days. He determined that England should have some ancient history even if he wore out his last quill to procure it. Forthwith he sat down and concocted the story of one Brutus, a grandson of Æneas of Troy, who in the course of his travels discovered, colonized and gave his name to Britain.

The ingenious man was destined, however, to disappointment. Nubriensis, Polydore Virgil and Camden, sordid realists with no imagination, callously rejected the work. It was a case of mistaken vocation. As a historian Geoffrey was a failure, even in the twelfth century; today he might

make his fortune on the staff of an evening paper.

Several of the more ancient nations of the earth filched "a past" and ignored criticism. The Egyptians appropriate a period of some fifty thousand years, and pretend to have noted twelve hundred eclipses before the reign of Alexander the Great.

The Chaldeans unblushingly state that they made astronomical observations during four hundred thousand years. The Chinese modestly claim to have done the same for merely forty thousand years, though this takes them back many centuries before the creation, as established by Moses.

The Arcadians openly boasted that they were more ancient than the moon; while Sicilians make the date of the foundation of Palermo contemporary with the patriarch Isaac.

All this may wander a little from the subject, but where history begins heraldry begins also; besides, what is said of nations may equally well be applied to families.

Mr. Fox-Davies, the most exact and exclusive of modern heralds, says:

" . . . Though it is a brutal admission to have to make, I cannot believe, and do not believe for one moment, any man's account of his own family or take his word concerning them. No matter how truthful a man may be, his probity never seems to have stability on that one point."

Of the thousands of titled and untitled families who claim descent from followers of William the Conqueror, etc., only three hundred and thirty can prove their claim back to Henry VII!

"Hungry time hath made a glutton's meal on this catalogue of gentry" (the list of gentry of Henry VI's time), "and hath left but a very little morsel for manners remaining," says Fuller in his book, "Worthies of Bedfordshire."

On one subject at least the ancient

heralds cannot be taken as authorities—that of natural history; one has been taught, for instance, to deny the existence of the griffin they so often portray, though Sir John Mandeville vouches for it in the twenty-sixth chapter of his "Ryght Merveylous Travels," saying that in Bacharie there are "more plentee" than anywhere else, having "the body upward as an egle, and benethe as a lyoun"; they are, however, stronger than a combination of one hundred eagles and eight lions, frequently carrying off two yoked oxen to their nests; of their feathers "men maken bowes full stronge to schote with arowes."

They also blazon the homocane (half child, half spaniel), the falcon fish with a hound's ear and "the wonderfull pig of the ocean"—all vouched for, no doubt, by travelers who had seen them.

Nor do they distinguish themselves in the role of prophets; after a small victory in the War of Independence an English officer was granted on his crest "a broken flagstaff bearing the American standard reversed." It is surprising that this has not since been differenced as "the American standard on a flagstaff very durably repaired."

The question of authorizing arms in the United States has been brought before Congress, but by some oversight the words of Noah were never quoted, which would have at once persuaded the House that no country has so ancient a right to use these once much esteemed appurtenances of a gentleman. For after leaving the ark, writes Dame Juliana, he said to Ham: "Wycked kaytiff, as a churle thou shalt live in the thirde parte of the worlde wiche shall be calde Europe, that is to say, the contre of churles." But to Japheth he says: "Cum heder, my sonne, thou shalt have my blessing, dere; I make thee a gentilman of the West part of the worlde, that is to say, the contre of gentilmen."

